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THE  
DOCTRINES OF FRIENDS:

OR,

PRINCIPLES OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION,

AS HELD BY

THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS,

COMMONLY CALLED QUAKERS.

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By ELISHA BATES.

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MOUNT PLEASANT, OHIO, PRINTED.

DUBLIN:

RE-PRINTED BY THOMAS L. WHITE, 149, ABBEY STREET.

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1828.

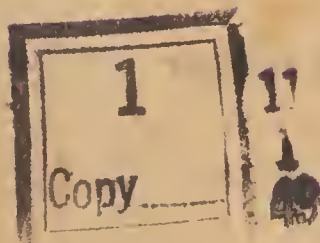
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*At a MEETING OF FRIENDS APPOINTED  
TO REPRESENT OHIO YEARLY MEETING, held by  
adjournments, from the 3d of the Ninth month,  
to the 13th of the same, inclusive, 1824:*

The writings of ELISHA BATES, on the Doctrines  
of Friends, were examined, and approved; and he  
left at liberty to publish them: and the clerk is  
directed to furnish him with an extract of this  
minute, and sign it on behalf of the Meeting.

Extracted from the Minutes, by,

JORDAN HARRISON, Clerk.



## PREFACE.

IN publishing, at the present day, a treatise of the Doctrines of Friends, it is not intended to convey an idea that the works of this kind, already extant, are not judiciously written. Nor is it intended, by the present performance, to supersede those valuable writings. On the contrary, I would recommend them to more general attention than they now receive. Nor is it to propagate or defend *new* principles, that I have entered into the present engagement: but to present, in a concise, and yet explicit manner, an account of the *acknowledged doctrines* of the Society. For, though I consider the doctrinal works that have been published, (with the consent of the Society,) are all well adapted to the particular views, of the respective writers, and to the times at which they were written: yet it may be noticed, that the writings of our primitive Friends are voluminous and scarce, while those of modern date do not notice many points of doctrine, which sometimes become interesting, from the particular course of religious inquiry.

It has long been a settled sentiment in



my mind, that a work, setting forth clearly the acknowledged principles of the Society, in all material points, without being tedious or expensive, would be useful, both to the members of the Society itself, and to serious inquirers of other religious denominations. With this sentiment, I cherished, for several years, a hope that some qualified individual would undertake the task. Finding, however, this hope not realized, and feeling more impressively the importance of the work, the apprehension of duty gradually and permanently settled on my mind, to make the attempt.

Though the *arrangement* of the subjects, and the manner of treating them, have been dictated by the views presented to my own mind, yet, in the subjects themselves, I have endeavoured to keep to the acknowledged doctrines of the Society. And, in compiling the following pages, I have made such extracts, from the writings of our early Friends, as seemed necessary to establish the position, that they held the principles laid down. And, in taking these extracts, I have consulted those parts of their writings in which they make a statement of *what they believe*, rather than those in which they expose the errors of contrary opinions.

And here it may not be improper to remark, that many of the Essays which were published by the members of this Society, in the early periods of its history,



were in direct and pointed controversy; and frequently in reply to affusions from the press, which have long since been consigned to merited oblivion. In these replies of our Friends, the object of the writer was frequently to expose the *consequences* of the opinions which they opposed. And, as the publications thus opposed and exposed are now out of print, and generally forgotten, while the replies of our Friends are preserved, there is some possibility that their views and sentiments may not be gathered from *such* of their writings, without a knowledge of the causes which gave rise to them.

This remark will not apply exclusively to the writings of Friends; it will hold in relation to controversial works in general. And the more bold and animated the manner of the writer, the more occasion there will be to keep this particular distinction in view.

My intention, at first, was to compile a general history of the Society, embracing its doctrines and discipline, together with biographical notices of individual members. Which several divisions of the subject, I proposed to treat of separately. The doctrines stood first in my view, and, having completed these, it seemed, for different reasons, best to publish this part, without waiting for the slow collection of materials, and the laborious arrangement of the historical and biographical parts. These

remaining parts of the original design are not abandoned, but whether either of them will ever be accomplished, remains with Him at whose disposal are time, opportunity, and capacity for every good word and work.

It is, perhaps, one of the laws of nature, that objects assume a degree of the shade which belongs to the medium through which they are seen. And this is as true in the moral, as in the physical world. Hence, prejudice or prepossession cannot fail to cast a shade over any principle or performance that may be examined through them. But there is a principle (the Spirit of truth,) which can divest the mind of these, and enable us to see things as they really are. I solicit, therefore, a calm and candid perusal of the "Doctrines of Friends." And, over and above all, I earnestly desire an increasing prevalence of the influence of that principle which, independent of names or denominations, infuses into the hearts of the children of men the feelings of gratitude and love to God, and of charity and love to each other.

ELISHA BATES.

Mountpleasant, Second month, 1825.



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# DOCTRINES.

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## CHAP. I.

### ORIGINAL AND PRESENT STATE OF MAN.

ON entering into a concise statement of the Doctrines of this Society, it seems most consistent with the natural order of things to take, in the first place, a view of the original and present state of man.

The Scriptures bear testimony, that man was made in the image of his Creator. "In the image of God created he him. Male and female created he them." Gen. i. 27. In this state, which was his by creation, he lacked neither wisdom nor understanding. He lacked nothing that was necessary to enable him to exercise the dominion that was given him in the world; or that could perfect his happiness, or secure acceptance in the Divine sight; otherwise he could not have been in the *image* of God; nor would it have been said that "God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was *very good*." *ib.* 31. Accordingly, we find that he had a clear sense of the relation in which he stood to the Almighty, was favoured with

communion with him; and when the various orders of animated beings, were brought before him, he had such a sense and understanding of natural things, as enabled him to give them all appropriate names. This was not *acquired knowledge*. But all these faculties and capacities, were the endowments with which he was furnished, and made up his *original character*.

Thus constituted, our first parents were placed in a situation, adapted to their comfort and convenience. "The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there He put the man whom He had formed." Gen. ii. 8. And though there may be a mystical signification in these terms, representing that spiritual communion and fellowship which the saints obtain with God, by Jesus Christ, yet we do not thence call in question the historical fact, that they were provided with a residence, in all respects, adapted to their condition. Nor do we doubt that when they lost their happy *condition*, by disobedience, they lost also the *residence* which was adapted only to that condition. But these truths, respecting the outward affairs of our prime ancestors, are not so deeply interesting to us, as those relations in which they stood *before*, and *after* their transgression. And as the inspired historian, was led to touch very briefly on these outward affairs, so we believe it is not necessary, or even *safe*, to run out into speculation concerning them. But so far as the Holy Scriptures record *historical facts*, respecting the first, and all subsequent ages, those facts we admit as truth.



Though man was created such a being as has been described, and was so eminently favoured, in relation both to temporal and spiritual things, yet the sequel proved that he was placed in a state of probation; and that he was permitted to choose good or evil, according to his own free will. He received a command; and the penalty of death was annexed to its violation. "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." Gen. ii. 17.

As he was constituted in due rectitude of body and mind—as he was, in his first estate, in the divine image, he must have had power to stand. How is it possible that he could have been in that image, if he had not power to reject evil, and to remain in a state of acceptance? That he had this power, is evident not only from the character which is clearly given of him, but from the divine attributes themselves. Therefore, as surely as we believe that God is merciful and just, so surely we believe that Adam was enabled to obey the command that was given him. (*Vide Art. Universality of Grace.*)

In the freedom of will, with which our first parents were endowed, they disobeyed the divine command. As the divine image was the predominating part of the human character, in the beginning, it was said: "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." And this sentence was accomplished, in the loss of all that constituted that image. In the loss of the divine life, death actually passed upon him, in the day of his transgression. (*Vide Barclay's Apol. Prop. 4. Phipps*

*on Man, chap. 1.*) He became fallen, degenerate, and dead, retaining nothing superior to his animal and rational faculties, and even these were depraved.

“Adam, by his fall, lost his glory, his strength, his dominion, by which he could easily have withstood the devil, and came under great weakness, whereby the enemy’s temptations had a ready access to him, and he became very obnoxious to fall under them. And so all his posterity are come under the same weakness and obnoxiousness to the enemy’s temptations, who influenceth them, by entering into them, and powerfully inclining them to sin. And this malignant influence, is the seed of sin in all men, whereby they become obnoxious by reason of the fall.” *Barclay, fol. ed. pp. 768, 310.* Thus, in the language of the apostle, “by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” Nor do we question that the visible creation suffered some change, in consequence of the lapse of him, to whose accommodation it was so remarkably adapted. In the sentence pronounced upon Adam, it was said: “Cursed is the ground for thy sake”—“thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee.” Gen. iii. 17. 18. Thus we believe, that the whole posterity of Adam, is affected by his fall; but we do not believe that it is with guilt, but with *infirmity* and a *proneness* to sin. For, “though we do not ascribe any whit of Adam’s *guilt* to men, until they make it theirs, by like acts of disobedience, yet we cannot suppose that men, who have come of *Adam naturally*, can



have any *good thing* in their *nature*, as belonging thereto, which he, from whom they derived their nature, had not, himself, to communicate to them."

"If then we may affirm, that Adam did not retain in his *nature*, as belonging thereto, any will or light, capable to give him knowledge in spiritual things, then neither can his posterity. For whatsoever good any man does, it proceeds not from his nature, as he is man, or the son of Adam, but from the seed of God in him, as a new visitation of life, in order to bring him out of his natural condition. So that though it is *in* him, it is not *of* him." But we deny the doctrine of "original sin;" and cannot suppose that sin is imputed to infants, (till they actually commit it;) for this obvious reason; that "*they* are by nature children of wrath, who walk according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the hearts of the children of disobedience; here the apostle gives *their evil walking*; (and not any thing that had been committed by Adam,) as the reason of their being children of wrath. And this is suitable to the whole strain of the Gospel, where no man is threatened or judged, for what iniquity he hath not actually wrought." (*Vide Barclay's Apol. Prop. 4.*)

Thus, we conceive it contrary to the attributes of the Almighty, his mercy, and his justice, to charge any of his creatures with *guilt*, for offences in which they had no agency. It is even contrary to the simplest principles of right and wrong, which we consider binding on men; and we dare



not charge the Divine Character, with being thus far below that standard of justice, which is set up for human actions.

Though the posterity of Adam could not be chargeable with *guilt*, on account of his transgression, yet he being dead, as to the *divine image*, could neither renew himself up again into his former condition, nor transmit to his posterity what he had not himself. Thus they became objects of *Redeeming Love*. *Even those who had not sinned, after the similitude of Adam's transgression*, stood in need of *redemption*, out of that state of utter incapacity in which they were involved; and which the apostle calls "death." Rom. v. 14.

For this great object a remedy was provided. Even the sentence pronounced upon them, contained the promise of the *seed*, which should bruise the serpent's head. Gen. iii. 15. This redeeming principle began then to operate, not only bringing man out of this state of death and incapacity, but producing the fruits of righteousness. By this, Abel offered a more acceptable offering than Cain. By this Enoch walked with God—and all the patriarchs and prophets were instructed in divine wisdom, and finally, obtained acceptance. For our acceptance is not by *nature*, or in our natural state, as the posterity of the first Adam; but in, and through Christ, the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, who is called a "quickening spirit." 1 Cor. xv. 45, 47. The same Apostle to the Ephesians says; "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." and

again he says; “and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come, he might show the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us, through Christ Jesus: for by grace ye are saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast.” Eph. ii. 1, 3—9.

The innocence of children is sometimes mentioned, as an evidence of their being in the same condition that Adam was in, before his fall; and in confirmation of this idea, that passage of Scripture is adduced, in which it is related that “Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, verily, I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven,” Matt. xviii. 2, 3, &c. On referring to Mark ix. 33, where the same event is recorded, it appears that the disciples had then given way to feelings of ambition and contention; “for they had disputed by the way, who should be greatest.” To correct their views, our Lord adopted the mode of reproof that has been mentioned, using those expressions, so remarkably adapted to the feelings



which they had just indulged. “If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all,” Mark ix. 35. “Whosoever, therefore, shall *humble* himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven,” Matt. xviii. 4. This was the very thing they had been disputing among themselves, and they were now informed that it was not to be expected but in *humility*.

But, taking the passage in its utmost latitude, it will go no further than to shew the necessity of a *freedom from sin*, which *we*, who have become moral agents, must experience, through the operations of grace, producing repentance, and obtaining forgiveness, &c.

But innocence *alone* cannot constitute the divine image. For, as it would be highly injurious to the divine character, to assert that God is no more than *an innocent* being, so it must be evident that the divine image does not consist in innocence *alone*.

No one will pretend that the little child is in a sensible communion with God, or clearly sensible of his divine influence, which was the case with Adam. Again, the desires of the infant, in its purest state of innocence, are directed to objects of *sense*—to the gratification of its creaturely appetites. But such was not the case with Adam, in his primitive state, nor is it the case with the true Christian.

And, as the text does not contain any allusion to the primitive condition of man, so, on the most close examination, it cannot be made to prove that infants are in *that* condition, or that they are not, in common with the rest of the human family, ob-



jects of the *redeeming* love of Jesus Christ, and partakers of the benefits derived from *Him*.

If we impartially reflect on the present condition of the human race, we shall find, in the pagan darkness which overspreads a large portion of the world, a striking evidence that the *natural* state of man is very different from that in which Adam was placed, in the beginning. *That* portion of mankind have not the knowledge of God, his attributes, and their own relations to him, either by intuition, or by their reasoning faculties. If every individual were furnished with the same knowledge, in divine things, that Adam had, and admitted into the same near relation to the Deity, and communion with *Him*, there could be no such thing as a nation of pagans: for, even if all should ultimately fall, still there would be a portion of the life of every individual, in which he would know God, as Adam did in the beginning. Neither, if reason and our own rational faculties could naturally lead up into this exalted state, would it have been said by the apostle, that "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither indeed can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned," 1 Cor. ii. 14. Nor should we find this declaration realized in all conditions, as to outward circumstances, from the highest refinements of civilized life, to the most degraded state of uncultivated nature.

Those who are occasionally found in Heathen countries with enlightened minds, have risen out of darkness and ignorance, by the operations of the

grace of God, that brings salvation, and which the apostle expressly declares has appeared to all men. They *become* such by a slow progress of improvement, and of that change which is called regeneration, and the new birth—and not as an original state. Thus these Heathen nations illustrate what human nature is, and shew the insufficiency of those faculties which constitute it, to renew them up into the divine image. They show that human nature itself is *fallen*, is low and grovelling—still tending downward, “as the sparks fly upward.”

But the human family was not left destitute, in this miserable condition. “In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins,” 1 John iv. 9, 10. “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly,” Rom. v. 6. “Therefore, as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the *free gift came upon all men unto justification of life*,” Rom. v. 18. Here the disease and the remedy were brought into contrast by the apostle, to show that the latter was exactly adapted to the former. As, in the fall, the capacity of enjoying communion and fellowship with God was lost, so, through Jesus Christ, it is restored. As, in the first, we were unable to do any good thing, but were naturally joined and united to evil, forward and propense to all iniquity, servants to the



power and spirit of darkness; in the remedy provided, "we are so far reconciled to God by the death of his Son, that we are put into a capacity of salvation, having the glad tidings of the gospel of peace offered unto us, and we are called and invited to accept the offered redemption. In which respect we understand these Scriptures: he slew the enmity in himself. He loved us first. Seeing us in our blood, He said unto us, live. He who did not sin, his own self bare our sins in his body on the tree; and died for our sins, the just for the unjust."

(*Vide Barclay's Apol. p. 204. Also Eph. ii. 15. 1 John iv. 10. Ezek. xvi. 6. 1 Pet. ii. 22, 24, and iii. 18.*)

And, as the *guilt* of Adam is not imputed to us, till we make it ours by our own transgressions; so, in order to obtain perfect redemption, we must experience *regeneration*. That divine principle which is the purchase of Christ's death, and which is called by the apostle, *grace*, and by the evangelist, "*the light of men*," must be brought into operation in us, taking the rule and government of our hearts, and setting us free from the "law of sin and death." "He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again," 2 Cor. v. 15.

Thus, we consider redemption in a two-fold sense: both which, in their own nature, are perfect: though, in their application to us, the one is not, nor can be, without respect to the other. The first is the redemption performed and accomplished by Christ for us, in his crucified body, without



us; the other is the redemption wrought by Christ *in us*. This last follows the first in order, and is a consequence of it, proceeding from it as an *effect* from its *cause*. So, as none could have enjoyed the *last*, without the *first* had been, (such being the will of God,) so also can none now partake of the *first*, or secure to himself the true benefits of it, but as he witnesseth the last. Wherefore, as to us, they are both causes of our justification; the first the *procuring*, *efficient*, the other the *formal* cause. (*Vide Barclay's Apol. pp. 204, 205.*)

The condition in the fall may also be considered in a two-fold sense: 1st. As we are in the image and likeness of Adam, Gen. v. 3., the soul being connected with an animal body, possessing sensations, appetites, and passions, tending to excess, and exposed to the influence of the grand enemy: and, 2dly. As we yield to temptation, and come under the government or power of the devil, as Adam did. As these two states comprehend the whole ground of moral evil, so the means provided, through Jesus Christ, apply to this whole ground. First, as to what Christ has done for us without us, placing us once more in a capacity to receive salvation, conveying to us a measure of grace, which will bring salvation to all who do not reject it, but submit to its operations; and, lastly, as this work is effected in us, and that change of heart is produced, which constitutes the new creature.

So then, when we consider the present condition of the human family, we find that on commencing our existence, we inherit, or receive two principles,

one of evil, and the other of good. These two principles are as seeds, not having yet germinated. The mind itself is very much in the same state; being without knowledge, and very much without understanding. As the capacities of the mind enlarge, and its faculties are brought into action, these two principles also begin to work, and a conflict and warfare take place. The soul, being distinct from both of these principles, has the power of choosing which it will serve. If the good is chosen, it, being the stronger, binds, brings down, and casts out the other, and brings the soul into complete redemption, both from sin, and from its consequences. But if the evil is preferred, as we "cannot serve two masters," the grace becomes rejected; and though it still, again and again, revisits the soul, breaking its fetters, and giving it ability to subdue the powers of darkness, yet, if still slighted or neglected, it finally leaves us to ourselves, and the government of that principle of evil which we have preferred; for the divine determination remains unaltered: "My spirit shall not always strive with man," Gen. vi. 3.

Thus we are left without excuse. Though we do not commence our existence with that degree of knowledge, that strength of intellect, and enlarged religious stature, which characterized the first man, and in many other respects are sunk far, very far, below his primitive state, yet the grace afforded is sufficient for us, sufficient for our preservation from sin, from the first dawn of life, to its final close.



And here it may be proper to apply the caution, "What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder," Matt. xix. 6. For redemption is only to be obtained through the means which God has provided by Jesus Christ. Had it not been for what Christ "has done for us without us," we could not have had the seed of grace; for it is "the gift of God," which we could not obtain for ourselves. Without *this*, the visitations and operations of the Spirit of God in our hearts could never have been known, and consequently this redeemed state could never have been experienced. Neither, on the other hand, (as moral agents,) can what Christ has done for us, without us, secure salvation. The grace afforded must rule in us, or it cannot ultimately benefit us. Even the renewed visitations of his love, in our hearts, if resisted, will be so far from securing our final salvation, that they will add a heavy load to our condemnation.

The condition of man, before the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh, has sometimes been brought into view. Divine goodness, in providing the means of salvation for fallen man, in sending his beloved Son into the world, to "taste death for every man," was pleased to defer that outward manifestation, until, by a course of instruction, mankind could be prepared to receive Him. And He, whose view takes in, at once, the past, the present, and the future, made it apply, as respected salvation, *before*, as well as *after* the time of its advent. The fathers "drank of that spiritual



Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ," 1 Cor. x. 4. Though light, knowledge, and many spiritual favours have been more abundantly diffused *since* the coming of Jesus Christ, yet, as a means of salvation, his grace was dispensed *before* that time, as well as *after*. This, as W. Penn expresses it, was "on the *credit*" of what was promised in the very sentence pronounced on our prime ancestors.

Through all the early ages, the condition of the human mind, and its capacity for understanding in divine things, required that there should be much outward form and ceremony, addressed to the outward senses, and illustrative of the great work of redemption. From a low and servile state, they were to be led, like children, in the first rudiments of science, through several dispensations, until, "In the fulness of time," the Messiah came, and introduced a pure and spiritual dispensation, abrogating the types and ceremonies which were designed to lead to him, and granting a more copious affusion of his own divine influence, than had been communicated under the preceding dispensations.

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Having thus briefly stated the doctrine of the original and present state of man; with a few hints relating to the different dispensations, it may not be improper to advert to another subject, which has been slightly brought into view.

In the account which is given in Scripture, of

the transgression of our first parents, it appears they were tempted by an evil agent,\* distinct from man; and that this agent prompted them to sin, when they were in their original innocence.

Through all ages, and under almost all degrees of darkness or light, which have prevailed, however the doctrines of religion may have been obscured, by successive innovations on those truths, which God has been pleased to reveal, the great outlines of theology have been deeply impressed on the minds of men. Wherever we go, among civilized or uncivilized nations, we still find traces of the belief of a great first cause, and superintending power, the source of all good, and the object of adoration. We find, also, evidences of a belief that there is a principle or spirit, malignant in its nature, and the source of all evil. The accountability of man for his actions, &c. is another sentiment extensively believed. These first principles appear under various modifications, according as they have been viewed through the medium of light or darkness; but all retaining clear evidences of a common origin; which could have been no other than divine revelation. Even the darkest system of polytheism, if carefully investigated, discovers traces of such revelation. But the human mind, not resting satisfied with what is received through this medium, has, through all ages, possessed a strong disposition to bring down divine things, to the level of its own, unaided

\* In using the term AGENT, I intend to convey the idea of a being possessing the power of action.



capacity. Hence, among heathen nations, the attributes of the Deity, and the virtues which adorn the human character, were personified, and denominated deities; and then attempted to be made visible to the outward senses. Hence all those contemptible things that have been made the objects of veneration and worship, under the general term of idols. The human mind is not yet divested of the same propensity, leading it to leave the ground of all true knowledge in divine things, and in the strength, or rather weakness, of its own faculties, build up some system, which, like an *idol*, made visible to the outward senses, and at all times accessible to the creature, is at all times open to creaturely comprehension.

But, returning from this little digression, and without further pursuing the fables of the ancients, or the parallels between them and the more refined speculations of later times, it may not be improper to introduce the sentiments of some of the first distinguished members of the Society of Friends, on the subject before us.

G. Fox, in his Journal, vol. 2, page 22, says, "The devil abode not in the truth. By departing from the truth, he became a devil." "There is no promise of God to the devil, that ever he shall return into the truth again; but to man and woman, who have been deceived by him, the promise of God is, that the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head: shall break his power and strength to pieces."

Page 402, he says, "The devil, who is out of



the truth, tempted man and woman to disobey God; and so drew them into the fall from the truth."

William Penn, in his "Rise and Progress," in speaking of the original condition of man, says, "But this happy state lasted not long: for man, the crown and glory of the whole, being tempted to aspire above his place, unhappily yielded, against command and duty, as well as interest and felicity; and so fell below it, lost the divine image, the wisdom, power, and purity he was made in. By which, being no longer fit for Paradise, he was expelled that garden of God, his proper *dwelling and residence*, and was driven out as a poor vagabond, from the presence of the Lord, to wander in the earth, the habitation of beasts. Yet God, who made him, had pity on him: for he, seeing man was deceived, and that it was not of malice, or an *original presumption* in him, (but through the subtlety of the serpent, who had *first fallen from his own estate*, &c.) in his infinite goodness provided a way to repair the breach."

The same author, in his "Christian Quaker," says, "The world had not been long created, before man, being envied by Lucifer, the fallen angel, was betrayed of his innocence by him."

(*Vide Barclay's Works, fol. ed. pp. 391, 625. Also Ellwood's Sac. Hist. on the fall of Adam.*)

From these, and many other passages that might be mentioned, it is clear that the Society, from the beginning, have believed that the principle of evil, on the one hand, and the grace which brings sal-

vation, on the other, are both distinct from man, and form no part of him, other than as he yields his mind and members servants to either.

On examining whether the serpent could have been any thing that constituted a part of the woman, it will be proper to remember that male and female were created in the divine image, and in this image, there could be nothing that, of itself, separated from the divine will. Or else there must have been discordant properties in the divine nature: properties repulsive to each other, and which of themselves, separated from each other, thus producing its own dissolution. But these are conclusions we dare not admit. That image, which constituted the character and the dignity of man, as he came pure from the hands of his Creator, though it fell infinitely short of the divine original, was still a true copy, and the different capacities and attributes, (if I may be allowed the expression,) all harmonized, and united together.

Even while Eve was reciting the divine command, and the penalties of disobedience, the tempter denied the truth of the declaration of the Almighty. This evidently was sinful; but it was before Eve had sinned. Through the whole account, recorded in the Scriptures, the tempter is represented as distinct from the man and woman. And as they were represented to be distinct agents, in the transgression, so judgment was passed upon each, separately and distinctly.

When the question was propounded to Adam, "Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded



thee that thou shouldst not eat?" he endeavoured to excuse himself, by placing the blame on the woman; and Eve, in like manner, to excuse herself, laid the blame on the serpent, who had beguiled her. What extenuation of the crime could it have been, to say, that she had beguiled herself? Or how could she have said, that something of the divine image, which she possessed, beguiled her?

Thus far, the omniscient Judge proceeded with interrogatives and expostulations; knowing that his frail and fallen creatures had been tempted, and thus drawn into sin; and therefore mercy and forbearance had been extended to them. But towards the *tempter*, the grand enemy, there was no expostulation, no indulgence, but the curse, unmixed, unmitigated, descended on him. In the several sentences pronounced on that occasion, the idea of distinct and separate agents is preserved throughout; and more particularly as related to the serpent. "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between *thy* seed and *her* seed. *It* shall bruise *thy* head, and *thou* shalt bruise *his* heel." The line of separation is so completely drawn, that we cannot blend the two objects of this sentence in one.

When the promised Messiah came, and was about entering on his important mission, he was led of the Spirit, into the wilderness, where he encountered temptation. And here the tempter was spoken of, in his most malignant character, "the devil." Let it be remembered that in the Lord Jesus, "the fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily."

It would be blasphemy to say that the *devil* here was not a distinct agent. And yet our Lord was tempted "as we are," and "without sin." But if the devil was a distinct agent, in his temptations of our Lord, and is not a distinct agent in *our* temptations, he could not have been tempted as we are; but the apostle expressly declares that he *was*. But if there was a malignant, evil spirit, that tempted our Lord, in the days of his personal appearance on the earth, it completely establishes the position that there *is such an evil agent*.

The idea that temptation is not sin, is intimately connected with the belief, that, thus far, it is the work of an agent distinct from man. Therefore, while the temptations are only *presented*, and not embraced, they are not the act of the individual, and attach no guilt to him, unless he does embrace them, or, in some degree, yield to them. But, as every temptation must be an attempt to destroy the government of Him whose right it is to reign in the hearts of his rational creatures, and consequently to destroy the divine life in the soul, it must be highly criminal and offensive in the agent, whoever he may be. "This," says R. Barclay, "is the devil's guilt, (or sin), and not theirs who are tempted, till they make it theirs by their own acts." But if there is no evil agent, but the passions of men, then the first motions of temptation, even though resisted, are *sin* to the individual, because the opposition to the law, and the enmity against the divine principle, are exclusively his own.



So far as this subject is spoken of in the Scriptures of truth, the devil is spoken of as distinct from man, and we have no reason to call in question, either the *truths*, or the *manner* of inculcating them, which divine goodness has been pleased to present to us, through the medium of revelation.

The apostle Peter, in his 2d Epistle, ii. 4., says, "God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness." And Jude remarks, "And the angels that kept not their first estate, but left their own habitations, he hath reserved in everlasting chains, unto the judgment of the great day."

It is not necessary to recite the various passages in the Old and New Testament, to show that the term *angels*, in its general signification, applies to a superior order of beings. How they are constituted, what are their capacities, and what could become a spring of action in them to sin, are questions that certainly do not concern us, and it is an evidence of folly and presumption, to enter into the inquiry.

But between their case and ours, their apostacy and the fall of man, there is a striking difference. To them, we hear of no promise, no redemption. To us, redemption and restoration are offered. Man is still represented as drawn into sin by *temptation*, and not in consequence of his own spontaneous revolt. We have to contend with a powerful adversary—powerful in exciting the passions to gross sins, and powerful to mislead, through the deceivableness of sin. Hence, the propitiation,

and mediation of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the aid of his Spirit afforded, to enable us to work out our salvation.

Behold, therefore, the goodness and severity of God! Towards the angels which fell, severity, but towards fallen man, drawn into sin by temptation, goodness, if we accept, and continue in his goodness. If we resist temptation, through the aid of Him who knows how to succour them that are tempted, no power can prevail against us. For He who cast down the angels, that kept not their first estate, can still cast down all the powers of darkness, and enable us to triumph over all our souls' enemies. But if we give way,—if we sin—though the day of mercy may be extended, yet we have the awful reflection, that we have, thus far, advanced to an assimilation with the nature of the devil; and so far brought ourselves into his condemnation. And, without repentance—without rising out of this condition, we must continue for ever in a separation from God, and in a dreadful association or connexion with the malignant spirit.

The world, the flesh, and the devil, make up the grand combination of enemies against which we have to contend. Without pretending to explain these terms to their full extent, I will just observe, that the *flesh* assails us by those passions and appetites which we possess, as constituent parts of our fallen nature. These, without the controlling influence of the Spirit of Christ, tend to excess and to wrong objects, and consequently to sin. The *world* diverts from the paths of piety, by the corrupt



example of those around us, and by the powerful influence of external objects, attracting our affections to themselves. The *devil*—a spirit opposed to every thing of goodness, enters into our passions, stimulates them to evil, gives power to corrupt examples, and unreal value to external objects: but above all, draws off the mind from the love of God, and the remembrance of his goodness, and represents the sublime enjoyments, which are to be found in the divine presence, as to be dreaded, rather than desired. And though the *world* or the *flesh*, may generally be the mediums, through which the attack is made on our fidelity to God, yet whoever carefully investigates the subject, will discover certain impressions and excitements, which are unmixed, satanic influences,

## CHAP. II.

### OF REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS.

THE doctrine of rewards and punishments, necessarily embraces the immortality of the soul, and the resurrection from the dead.

It is not my intention, at present, to enter into a formal refutation of those sceptical reasonings, which have been advanced against the immortality of the soul, and those other divine truths, which are brought to light by the Gospel. Men, who deny every thing which cannot be tested by the outward senses, will deprive themselves of the most pure and dignified enjoyments, which the author of our existence intended for us. Nor indeed do the principles of scepticism stop here. There have been men of bright talents, who might have been ornaments to the age in which they lived, but by adopting these principles, they were led on, from doubt to doubt, until they not only denied the truths of divine revelation, but were placed in the same predicament with respect to the most familiar and indubitable transactions and objects around them. Assuming as a general proposition, that the testimony of the outward senses does not amount to absolute certainty, they have gone on to argue, *that we cannot certainly know any thing.*



Those things which the common sense and common faculties of mankind, denominate as facts, occurring under our own observation, they have supposed may be only *ideas*—and hence, even our own actions, health, disease, or broken bones, the separation from friends or the loss of life, may be nothing but *notions*, in which there is no reality at all.

The Academics, who were a branch of the Platonic school of Philosophy, “laid it down as an axiom, that *nothing can be known with certainty*; the Pyrrhonists maintained that even *this* ought not to be positively asserted.” (*Adams’s View, Introduction, p. 33.*)

Absurd and disgusting as these propositions must appear to the enlightened mind, they were, even within the last century, dignified with the name of philosophy; and volumes were written to establish and to refute them.

And those who deny the doctrines of revealed religion, cannot maintain their opinions with greater plausibility, than that which was used to support the sceptical jargon I have mentioned—or in other words, to maintain the *ignorance* of man; against all *wisdom* and against all *truth*.

Though human reason never could lead the mind up to an acquaintance with God, his *attributes* and *will* concerning us; the means which he has provided for our redemption, or the existence of the soul after death; yet these things being revealed, or brought to light by the Gospel, are supported by the testimony of unperverted reason.

But, to my mind, one of the most conclusive arguments in favour of Divine revelation, is, that it goes beyond the evidences of the senses, or the discoveries of human reason. It is an important argument in favour of reason, that it opens to us a wide field of knowledge, of action, and of enjoyment, which lies beyond the reach of the senses. For this is one of the striking advantages that we enjoy above the brute creation. The same mode of reasoning will apply to divine revelation, as exalting our condition above what it could possibly be, if we possessed no higher principle than reason. For though reason enlarges our sphere of action, of usefulness, and of enjoyment; yet it also unfolds to us the miseries to which we are heirs, more fully than the brute creation can be made sensible of. The ox is led unconscious to the slaughter, and feels nothing of the terrors of anticipation. We see the powerful causes of *change*, *disappointment*, and *affliction*, that surround us. Were there nothing for the mind to rest upon, but such objects as come within the reach of the senses, and the calculations of human reason, we should be miserable indeed. It is, therefore, a source of peculiar gratitude, that "life and immortality are brought to light by the gospel." The beasts possess the faculties of sense. Man, though he possesses these faculties in an inferior degree, still rises above the brute creation, by the exercise of reason. This gives him a commanding advantage over the rest of animated nature; but it is



only a partial advantage. Though it enlarges his knowledge, his powers, and his enjoyments—it also abundantly enlarges his sphere of sufferings and distress. It therefore still remains for divine revelation, to direct his views, to regulate his affections and pursuits; and to give animation to his hopes, and support to his mind, through all the vicissitudes that can attend him. For as *reason* leads to discoveries which never could be made by the senses, so *revelation* unfolds to the believing mind, truths of infinite importance, which must have remained for ever hid from mere human reason. Without this source of intelligence, we are shut up in darkness. The philosopher may be as ignorant as the barbarian. With the refinements of civilized life, with the discoveries of science open to his view, he may be even more destitute of knowledge, in divine things, than the Indian, the Hottentot, or the Hindoo. In all nations, and in all ages, there is, (and has been,) a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding, Job xxxii. 8. As thus the capacity and the intelligence are received, we cannot contemplate the stupendous works of nature, or consider the order and harmony displayed in the visible creation, without feeling the concurrent testimony of nature and of reason, to the being of a God,—his wisdom, goodness, power, and providence. Thus the apostle, speaking with reference to the Gentiles, says:—"For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world, are clearly seen,

being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse." Rom. i. 20.

Finding ourselves placed in this vast repository of his works, made subservient to our wants, and promotive of our comfort; conscious too of a *mind* rising above the material world, to its invisible and incomprehensible Author, we see much to impress the obligations of *gratitude, love, and adoration*, which are his due from us. Feeling these obligations, and on looking around in the world, being able to find, not Him, but only the evidences that *He is*, we see the necessity of that communion with Him, by which we can become acquainted with his *will*, be enabled to *perform* it, and receive the consolation of his *immediate approbation*. Nor can we question the possibility of such a communion between God, who is a spirit, and the soul of man that is a spirit also.

Beings, capable of such communion with the Deity—brought up into converse with him, and leavened into his divine nature, must be designed for more than momentary existence. It cannot be supposed that the soul which has been raised to this participation of the divine nature, and which still, in humble hope, and animating love, clings to its Father and its God, will, after a few fleeting moments, be cast out into utter annihilation. No principle of reason would lead to such a conclusion. And here, in the reflection on the weight of obligation we are under, the blessings we have received, and the high privileges conferred upon us, we



must acknowledge "the exceeding sinfulness of sin." And while the mind looks, with a joyful assent, to an eternity of happiness, it cannot deny, however awful the idea, the possibility of an eternity, in a state of separation from the Divine presence.

H. Tuke, in his "Principles of Religion," p. 17, says: "But notwithstanding these, and other arguments which might be adduced, in support of those two first principles of religion, (the belief in God, and a future state,) the soul seems most fully to rest upon and enjoy them, when they are felt as objects of faith, rather than of reason. They then become like self-evident truths, for which our own feelings are the best support, and which act in concert with that declaration: "Without faith it is impossible to please Him; for he that cometh to God must believe that He is; and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him," Heb. xi. 6. And we ought ever to remember, after all our reasonings on these subjects, that "life and immortality are brought to light by the Gospel."

The immortality of the soul, and the resurrection, both of the just and the unjust, are the standing doctrines of the New Testament. And these doctrines, as set forth in the Scriptures, we firmly believe. In these sacred writings we are informed, that "the dust shall return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God, who gave it:" Eccles. xii. 7. "for flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." 1 Cor. xv. 50. The apostle

Paul, in speaking on this subject, in the same chapter, says: "But some will say, how are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come?" To this he replies, "Thou fool."—A merited reproof to those who are curiously endeavouring to be wise beyond what is revealed. Without answering the question in direct terms, the apostle brought into view the germinating process of grain, that is sown in the earth. "Thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain." And this *same* bare grain, we know, never rises. But the vegetative principle which it contained becomes evolved—the new plant springs up—the body of the original grain undergoes a decomposition, and again passes into its first elements. Thus also the apostle tells us, that "God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him." "So also, in the resurrection of the dead: it is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body:" (or, as W. Penn, on the authority of Beza, tells us it should be translated, "a natural body is sown, a spiritual body is raised.") "There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body." 1 Cor. xv. Thus, with the apostle, we believe in the resurrection of a spiritual body. What that body *is*, (or is to be,) we leave to Him who will give it, as it shall please Him.

And as, in a future state of existence, we shall be spiritual beings, so we believe, our habitations will be adapted to our condition.



That there should be *habitations* for spiritual beings, is not more mysterious, than that spirits should be connected with matter. And yet, we know such a connexion does exist between the soul and body.

We are aware that there are many wild speculative opinions, as well as gross ideas, respecting the habitation of the soul after death. Some may be so weak and low in their conceptions, as to imagine that the metaphors, by which *invisible* things are illustrated by *visible*, are to be taken literally, and thus fancy to themselves material beings and places: while others, more philosophically, as they suppose, refine away every thing, till realities are called in question. The Society of Friends are not chargeable with either of these extremes. As, on one hand, they never went into the low and gross ideas that have been suggested, so, on the other, when they have been charged with denying any heaven or hell but what was within them, they positively deny the charge, declaring it “a downright falsehood and gross calumny.” (*Vide Barclay's Works, fol. ed. p. 891.*)

The Divine Master, in order to comfort his immediate followers, told them: “In my Father's house are many *mansions*, if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a *place* for you.” John xiv. 2. What, or where this *place* may be, is not our business to inquire with curious and vain philosophical speculation. To those who indulge in such speculations, the reproof of the apostle, “Thou fool,” will as properly apply, as in

the case of the query, "how are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come?" For if it belongs to God to give it a body as it hath pleased Him, so it belongs to Him only, to prepare a place for us, according to his own inscrutable wisdom.

Before I close this subject, it seems proper to remark, that the Society have always considered it improper to indulge in speculation on subjects connected with religion, which Divine Goodness has not seen fit to reveal: "For the secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed, belong to us, and to our children." Deut. xxix. 29. A fondness to become wise in things not necessary to be known, very early obtained admission into the human mind; and still forms a prominent trait in the character of the natural man. But the humble Christian, instead of dwelling on the inquiry of the *how*, the *what*, and the *where*, can repose in confidence, that when he shall have passed the time of his probation here, he may commit his spirit into the hands of a faithful Creator.

We are placed, in this life, in a state of probation. And though that probation will soon pass over, yet the state of being to which we are approaching, is of eternal duration. And as we enter on the boundless ocean of eternity, we enter it under one of these awful sentences: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still, and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still:" or, "He that is righteous, let him be righteous still, and he that is holy, let him be holy still." Rev. xxii. 11. And



this day of solemn retribution is hastily approaching to us all; as it is written; "Behold I come quickly and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his works shall be." Ib. 12.

The divine Master particularly mentions some offences that should not be forgiven, neither in this world, nor in the world to come. Vide Matt. xii. 32. Luke xii. 10.

The wicked are represented as having their portion, where their worm dieth not, and where the fire is not quenched, but the smoke of their torments ascendeth up for ever and ever. (Vide 2 Thes. i. 9. 2 Pet. ii. 17. Jude 13. Rev. xix. 3, xx. 10. See also that interesting passage, Matt. xxv. from verse 31 to 46: concluding with these striking expressions:—"And these shall go away into *everlasting* punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." Here it is clearly asserted that the righteous are admitted into life eternal, while the wicked go into *everlasting* punishment.

It has been remarked by a celebrated writer:

"What ardently we wish, we soon believe."

But however pleasing it may be to those who cling to sinful pleasures, to suppose that the judgments of the Almighty in another state of existence, are temporary, and will soon pass over—however they may resort to inventions to find out expedients, and plausibilities in the doctrine of purgatory, or the transmigration of souls, or the expiation of sins, by the present inconvenience of vice, such

schemes and notions are but human contrivances, that may indeed amuse them for a while, but which they cannot carry with them beyond the grave.

On the manner in which we pass the time of our probation here, our final happiness or misery depends. How vain, how delusive is the idea, that any may slight the offers of redeeming love, and crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to open shame—squandering away the invaluable time, which was given them, to work out their salvation with fear and trembling; relying on another opportunity to be afforded, in some new body, or perhaps, in some new world! Such an idea seems directly calculated to lay waste the responsibility of man, which forms one of the powerful motives to circumspection and perseverance in well-doing.

Different, far different from these enervating and sin-pleasing speculations, are the views which are presented to us through the medium of divine revelation. Though unmixed and endless felicity on the one hand, and an eternal separation from God and happiness on the other, are represented as dependent on the manner in which we pass the time of our sojourning here—that time, with its conflicts and sufferings, in adorable goodness and condescension, is made *short*. We are not detained for ages in this troubled scene. A few short days, or fleeting years, are permitted to roll over us—a few (comparatively) earnest breathings to arise to heaven—a few painful conflicts to be



endured, and a little space filled up, in persevering integrity to God, and in putting on his divine nature! So short is human life, compared with that state of being to which it leads, that we seem only to be called upon to *arise, wash, and be clothed*, before we leave this state of weakness and of conflict.

On the other hand, though human life is thus transitory—though the race of the wicked is short—yet they have time enough to make a decided choice. Nor is this all. They are called and invited to holiness, by the grace of God, that brings salvation—convincing them of sin—inclining them to virtue, and giving them ability to overcome every temptation. To adopt a figurative mode of expression, used by R. Barclay, the Apologist—they are not only convinced of sin, and inclined to righteousness, but the Redeemer lays hold on them, and would raise them out of their pollutions, and free them from every entanglement, if they, on their part, only will not resist the operations of this redeeming power. But, if they refuse to be thus separated from their corruptions—if they *resist* the hand thus laid upon them, in adorable goodness—the consequence must be their own. The blackest crime that marks the depravity of man, is committed in a few moments. Nor was it a protracted period formerly, in which the Jews rejected the Messiah, and put him to the death of the cross. And this as effectually sealed their condemnation, as if they had been employed in it for ages. And thus it is of all others. If they reject and

destroy the life of Jesus in themselves; the act is complete in itself, whether it be done in a short or protracted period of time. They make that separation between God and their own souls, which must continue for ever. How preposterous would have been the idea, that because the chief priests and rulers of the Jews condemned and crucified our Lord, in the short space of a few hours, it would therefore have been consistent with the attributes of the Deity, to have allowed them the opportunity of going over the whole transaction again. And yet it would be as inconsistent with the Divine character, to permit this to be done *spiritually*, as outwardly: for it is as really a crucifying of the Lord Jesus, as that which was perpetrated by the Jews, without the gates of Jerusalem.

How awful is the consideration of this important subject! To despise and reject the heavenly visitation; and finally destroy the only possible means of salvation! The measure of grace thus given to each individual, as the means of salvation, is the purchase of Christ's death. If this be destroyed, is Christ again to suffer in the flesh? or did the apostle say truly, that "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." Heb. x. 27. Hence the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the eternal duration of its consequences.

How short, how fleeting, are the moments of vanity, and how low the gratifications, for which the dreadful penalty is incurred, of "depart from



me ye cursed, into *everlasting* fire, prepared for the devil and his angels !" Matt. xxv. 41. How shocking to reflect with what wild infatuation, thousands are spurning the offers of Redeeming love and eternal felicity, and rushing headlong, in the pursuit of delusive objects, to the abyss of ruin !

But on the other hand, it is a cheering, animating reflection, that the Christian warfare will soon be over. "Yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry." "Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me." And how sweet is the responding language—"Even so, come, Lord Jesus !" Well might the apostle say : "The sufferings of the present time, are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." Rom. viii. 18.

Let us then, warned by the dreadful consequences of disobedience, and animated by the hopes of the Gospel, press through every crowd of difficulties ; looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith : who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down on the right hand of the throne of God : "Heb. xii. 2. And who has promised : "To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me in my throne : even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." Rev. iii. 21.

### CHAP. III.

#### OF THE UNIVERSALITY OF GRACE, OR THE POSSIBILITY OF SALVATION TO ALL MEN.

WE believe that salvation, through Jesus Christ, is freely offered to all men. The Gospel is emphatically *good tidings of great joy*—embracing *all people* in its blessed operation. For “as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men;” Rom. v. 12. so all men stood (or stand) in need of a Saviour. And as the disease, or “death,” reached to all men, so the remedy, which was provided, reached also unto all. To this the Scriptures bear ample testimony, in divers places. For they expressly declare, that: “As in Adam, all die, so in Christ, shall all be made alive.” 1 Cor. xv. 22. And, “as by the offence of *one*, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so, by the righteousness of *one*, the free gift came upon *all men*, unto justification of life.” Rom. v. 18.

The declaration to the children of Israel, as delivered by Moses, in Deut. xxx. 19, is very striking: “I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and



death, blessing and cursing, therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live."

The 18th chapter of Jeremiah, contains the following declaration: "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up and to pull down, and to destroy it: if that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it, if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them." verses 7—10. The 18th and 33d chapters of Ezekiel, are almost entirely taken up with declarations of the same kind.

Our Lord himself declared; "God so loved the world, that he sent his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." And, as if to put the subject beyond all doubt, he added; "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." John iii. 15, 17. "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." 1 John ii. 2.

"The manifestation of the spirit is given to every man, to profit withal." 1 Cor. xii. 7.

"That was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." John i. 9.

As the divine image was lost by transgression, the means of redemption were provided. And as

“God is no respecter of persons,” those means must have been applicable to all who stood in need of them. Else the remedy was inadequate to the occasion, which we cannot suppose, and which the apostle strongly disproves. The whole human family stood in the same relation to their Creator. They were equally his by creation, and they were equally in need of his redeeming love, without which none could be saved. And as “the Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works,” Psalm cxlv. 9, he left none destitute of the interposition of his saving grace: “for,” says the apostle, “the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.” Titus ii. 11. And, as saith the Scriptures, “Christ died for all.” 2 Cor. v. 15.

The apostle very strongly reasons from analogy, in Rom. v. that as the effects of Adam’s transgression extended to all men, so the benefits of Christ’s coming, were equally extensive.

If then the premises and conclusion of the Apostle were true, it must be admitted that those who never heard the history of Adam’s transgression, were affected by it. (*Vide Original and Present state of Man.*) And who will deny this, since the proneness to sin, and the practice of sin, are abundantly prevalent among those who are destitute of this knowledge? For the grand enemy of man’s happiness, is not limited in his operations, to any class of the human family. And upon every principle of sound reasoning, we must also admit, that the apostle was equally correct in



maintaining, that the benefits of Christ's coming were as extensive. If the one was not confined to the historical knowledge of the remotely inducing or procuring cause, why should the other be? The one was a spiritual malady, the other a spiritual remedy. The one originated in the malice of the arch-enemy—the other emanated from the Love of God. And who will say that the malady could extend to subjects to whom the remedy could not be applied? Or that Satan, being able to carry on his work without being limited to external means, has completely fortified himself in a large proportion of the human family, by keeping out the historical knowledge of certain facts, without which outward knowledge, the Love of God in Christ Jesus, could not be extended to them?

We believe that the Power and Goodness of the Almighty, are not limited to external means. That though he condescends to make use of instruments—yet no flesh can glory in his presence. The divine language through the prophet Isaiah, is peculiarly striking: “I looked and behold there was no man—and I wondered that there was no intercessor:—therefore mine own arm brought salvation.” Thus it is that he looks upon those who have none to help them, and thus he interposes his own Almighty arm for their salvation. His love, unbounded as his power, leaves no corner of the earth unvisited. “Have they not heard?” saith the apostle, and then answers the question himself; “Yea verily;” asserting that the message of the

Gospel had been extended to the very ends of the earth: which could not apply to the preaching of the apostles: nor can it be said, to the present day, as respects the outward propagation of the doctrines of Christianity. And yet it was true, of the grace of God, which brings salvation—which has appeared to all men—and teaches to deny ungodliness, and the world's lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world. These embrace the great duties we owe to God and man. A corroborating testimony is found in Col. i. 23. where the apostle declares that "the Gospel was preached to, (or in,) every creature under heaven."

The Apostle Peter also, when brought to reflect on the condition of the Gentiles, cut off as they were, from many advantages which the Jews possessed—though he had supposed that the divine favor was limited to these outward means, yet when he was enabled to reflect on the situation of this part of the human family, and to understand the Divine Character, he exclaimed—"Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation, he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him." Acts, x. 34, 35. This could not apply to the household of Cornelius alone: nor could it be predicated on the belief of the general diffusion of the knowledge of Christianity, at some remote period of time. For being expressed in the present tense, it applied to the time then present, and including *every nation*, it certainly applied to those where Christ had not



been named. To this also agrees another testimony of the apostle Paul, where he brings into view the Gentiles who had not the law—yet doing the things contained in the law—and proving, from reasoning on facts like these, that they had the works of the law written in their hearts. Here we are to observe, that they had not the full knowledge of the dispensations of God to mankind, and yet they had the law written in their hearts. And He who is just and equal in all his ways, has made known his determination to deal with his dependant creatures, according to the means of improvement conferred upon them. Where much is given much will be required. Hence, they that have the law, will be judged by the law, and they that are without the law, shall be judged without the law. (*Vide Art. of the Scriptures.*)

Having thus touched on the condition of the heathen world, it may not be improper to make a few observations on the condition of infants.

And in the first place, it may be remarked, that *that* seed of grace, “which is the purchase of Christ’s death,” (*Barc. Apol.* p. 205,) or in the language of the apostle, “the free gift that has come upon all men,” Rom. v. 18. is an operative and redeeming principle. Though, when speaking of *moral agents*, we press the necessity of obedience, which leads to *works* of righteousness—as this is always the effect produced in moral agents, when the principle of divine life is not resisted, yet when we trace effects to their cause—when we go back to the first spring of action, as well as cause of

salvation, we ascribe *all* to the grace of God, and nothing to the *will* or *works* of the creature, when considered as such. The parable of the leaven, hid in three measures of meal, is an illustration of this doctrine. The leaven by its own operation, leavened and brought the meal into its own nature, and into an activity, if we may use the expression, exactly conformable to the properties and action of the leaven. Here the meal, being a *fit* subject, and also a passive subject, was brought into the oneness. But all the effects produced, were to be ascribed to the active principle, thus introduced into it. This exactly applies to us, as moral agents.

The salvation of infants depends on the same principle, and differs from that of persons who have attained to years of religious understanding, in no other respect than what arises from the respective capacities of each individual. We agree that every soul that comes into the world, does need a Saviour. We believe also that every soul, as it comes into the world, is an object of redeeming love. And as we inherit the seed of sin, (*Vide Original and Present State of Man*), so, through Jesus Christ, we are heirs of that seed of grace, which is the efficient cause of salvation, to all that are saved. If infants therefore receive the one, and we agree that they do, they must also receive the other, as “the free gift that has come upon all men, to justification.” This gift or remedy, must be, as the apostle testified, as extensive as the cause it was designed to remove.

Thus, the seed of the kingdom, as a redeeming



principle, is placed in the heart of every individual, ready to expand with the opening faculties of the soul, and to take the government of it, from the first dawn of intellectual life.

In maturer age, when these two principles begin to exert their respective powers, the principle of light and life, if not resisted by the individual, will overpower and eradicate the principle or seed of evil. As, in all stages, it is the “stronger,” so in this *first* stage of human life, where it has not been resisted—where it stands just as the gift and means of salvation, provided by our heavenly Father, it must be sufficient for salvation.

Thus, through Jesus Christ, a remedy sufficient for salvation has been provided for every individual soul; and nothing but individual disobedience can deprive us of the offered salvation.

“This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, but men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.” John viii. 16. Under this condemnation, children cannot come, until attaining to the condition of moral agents, they love darkness rather than light.

And let it be remembered, that this redeeming principle they receive from Christ, and not from their parents, either by nature, or by any promises they can make for them, or any ceremonies they can cause to be performed over them.

The doctrine of the possibility of salvation to all men, is essential, to be consistent with the attributes of the Deity. Because he cannot be represented as merciful or just or equal in his ways,

if this principle be denied. He cannot be represented as *merciful* to those to whom he extends *no mercy*—nor *just* in punishing those who *do his will*—nor *equal* in dispensing *happiness* to one and *misery* to another—when *both* stood in the same relation to him.

It is not intended to make the present a controversial work; and yet it seems difficult to place the subject in a proper point of view, without noticing the opposite doctrine. This doctrine supposes salvation is *not possible* to all: but that the final happiness or misery of mankind, and their actions in this life, are fixed by an unchangeable decree, from all eternity.\* That the

\* I shall not refer to authors that are out of print. But as A. Toplady is a modern writer, and has made numerous quotations from Calvin and other writers of that day, I shall look no further than to his Doctrine of Absolute Predestination, &c. “translated in great measure from the Latin of Jerom Zonchius.” He says: “Since, as was lately observed, the determining will of God, being omnipotent, cannot be obstructed or made void; it follows that he never did, nor does he now, will that every individual of mankind should be saved.” p. 23. “God, as we have before proved, wills not the salvation of every man: but gave his Son to die for them whose salvation he willed: therefore his Son did not die for every man.” p. 24. “From what has been laid down it follows, that Austin, Luther, Bucer, the scholastic divines, and other learned writers, are not to be blamed for asserting that God may, in some sense, be said to will the being and commission of sin.” p. 25.

“REPROBATION denotes \* \* \* God’s eternal PRETERITION of some men, when he chose others to glory, and his predestination of them to fill up the measure of their iniquities, and then to receive the just punishment of their crimes, even destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power,” &c. p. 48.



will of God is properly divided into secret and

“ We assert, that there is a predestination of some particular persons to LIFE, for the praise of the glory of divine grace ; and a predestination of other particular persons to death : which death of punishment, they shall inevitably undergo, and that justly, on account of their sins.” p. 53.

“ We assert that the number of the elect, and also of the reprobate, is so fixed and determinate, that neither can be augmented or diminished.” p. 59, “ That the decrees of election and reprobation, are immutable and irresistible.” p. 60. “ Not one of the elect can perish, but they must all necessarily be saved.” “ Now that is said to be necessary, which cannot be otherwise than it is.” p. 55.

“ God did, from all eternity, decree to leave some of Adam’s fallen posterity in their sins, and to exclude them from participation of Christ and his benefits.” p. 70.

“ Some men were, from all eternity, not only negatively excepted from a participation of Christ and his salvation ; but, positively ordained to continue in their natural blindness, hardness of heart, &c. and that by the just judgment of God.” “ His permission is a positive, determinate act of his will.” p. 72.

“ The non-elect were predestinated, not only to continue in final impenitency, sin, and unbelief ; but were, likewise, for such their sins, righteously appointed to infernal death hereafter.” p. 73. “ God’s predestination is most certain and unalterable, so that no elect person can perish, nor any reprobate be saved.” pp. 86, 87.

“ Although the will of God, considered in itself, is simply one and the same, yet in condescension to the present capacities of men, the divine will is very properly distinguished into SECRET and REVEALED. Thus it was his REVEALED will, that Pharaoh should let the Israelites go ; that Abraham should sacrifice his son ; and that Peter should not deny Christ : but, as was proved by the events, that it was his SECRET will that Pharaoh should NOT let Israel go, that Abraham should NOT sacrifice Isaac, and that Peter SHOULD deny his Lord.” pp. 18, 19.

“ God’s hidden will is PEREMPTORY and ABSOLUTE ; and therefore cannot be hindered from taking effect.” p. 21.

“ Whatever comes to pass, comes to pass by virtue of this absolute, omnipotent will of God, which is the primary and supreme cause of all things.” p. 21.

revealed—and these do not always correspond, or as it is expressed, “are apparently different.” The *revealed will*, they say, embraces the Divine commands and precepts. The *secret will* fixes the event beyond the possibility of change or contingency. Thus, when a command, or warning, or invitation, is given to the reprobate, or those who are finally lost, this is called the *revealed will* of God. But the *secret will*, renders it absolutely impossible for them to do otherwise than go counter to the revealed will. And this disobedience to the *revealed will* of God, is called *wilful* and *obstinate*, and those who are in it, are said to be *justly* punished for their *wilful* disobedience, and *obstinate* refusal to accept salvation: though the *secret will* cannot be resisted; and the reprobate are as completely governed by it, as the elect themselves.

Perhaps there is no system of opinions received among men, which contains so many paradoxes, as the doctrine of unconditional election and reprobation: and none that is more difficult to reconcile with itself, with Scripture, and with reason.

In the first place, we cannot conceive how a man can be said to act *voluntarily*, when he is urged to what he does, by irresistible force and necessity: how he can be said to be *obstinate* and *wilful*, in refusing to accept salvation, when it never was in his power to accept it: when he was first introduced into a course of evil, and continued in it, by necessity which he cannot possibly resist: and how he can be *justly* punished for actions thus committed,



appears equally opposed to the simplest principles of reason.

In the 32d chapter of Jeremiah, we have this language of the Almighty: "For the children of Israel, and the children of Judah, have only done evil before me from their youth: for the children of Israel have only provoked me to anger with the work of their hands, saith the Lord, for this city hath been to me as a provocation of mine anger and of my fury, from the day that they built it, even unto this day; that I should remove it from before my face; because of all the evil of the children of Israel, and of the children of Judah, which they have done to provoke me to anger, they, their kings, their princes, their priests, and their prophets, and the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And they have turned unto me the back, and not the face, though I taught them, rising up early and teaching them, yet they have not hearkened to receive instruction. But they set their abominations in the house which is called by my name to defile it. And they built the high places of Baal, which are in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire unto Molech, *which I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind*, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin." How then could it be his secret will, that they should do these things?

If we admit this doctrine, it must follow, that all laws, human and divine, are mere mockery—all regard to our actions—all efforts to be virtuous

and happy, are futile and ridiculous; because the whole course of events in this world, as well as the condition to be experienced in the next are fixed beyond the power of altering either. What signify the pompous appendages of civil government? Laws, penalties, and punishments have no effect: the *secret will* of God fixes all things, and renders every thing else inoperative. What are the institutions and rules of religious society, and the preaching of the Gospel, but solemn mockery, played off to excite the fears of the multitude, and create unnecessary distinctions and troubles in society? Why say, repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand? The message passes into air, and the event remains the same. Why draw distinctions between vice and virtue? The distinction is lost in the absolute decrees, and the saint and the sinner may regard each other as brethren, faithfully and punctually accomplishing the will of the same God, who has assigned to each, his proper place and business, "in filling up his grand designs of providence and grace."

It is happy for mankind, as this doctrine is admitted, that its supporters have insisted on the necessity of *means*. Though this is a contradiction to the principle, yet it is important to the well-being of society. They insist too on religious rectitude, and the practice of virtue, and make as decided distinctions between virtuous and vicious characters as others. This, too, is a departure from their principle, and it is well for the human family that this departure is made. They preach to the



elect and reprobate—they insist on the moral obligations that rest on all—consider that every man is bound to love, honour, and obey God, and that he should actually do so—that if he violates civil or religious duties, he is left without excuse, is culpable, is amenable to laws, human and divine. And in the ordinary transactions of life, a man may do *this*, or omit *that*, according to his *own* will. Thus, as relates to practical purposes, the doctrine is not sustained: it is held as a solemn truth, at once *believed* and *disbelieved*. And the welfare of civil society depends on this practical dereliction of the principle in question. For if this principle were brought into operation, without any of the checks which religious feeling and the good sense of mankind have given—it would completely paralyze every laudable and virtuous effort, both public and private. The *secret will* and unchangeable *decree*, which cannot be resisted or changed, would be supposed to do all for us. We need to cultivate neither our fields nor our minds—neither resist temptation, nor admonish the wicked, nor encourage the humble Christian. The eternal *fiat* will clothe our fields, without our toil—light and knowledge will spring up without the discipline of schools and the painfulness of research—the wicked will pursue the undeviating tenor of his way; and the elect will neither be comforted by our sympathy, nor discouraged by our forgetfulness. We ourselves shall not be the better for treading the path of self-denial, nor the worse for giving the loosened rein to our perverse inclinations. These are the

natural tendencies of the principle in question. And every precept, human and divine—every measure tending to the public good, every act of social duty, and every religious exercise in the human mind, are in direct opposition to this principle, and its simple operation in human affairs.

But much labour has been devoted to the doctrine, to reconcile it to Scripture and to reason.

The principal support which has been drawn from the Scriptures has been from the Epistle to the Romans, and a few other passages. But this is by taking detached portions of Scripture, and giving them a *construction* : for the Scriptures nowhere assert that a fixed, unalterable decree determines before-hand the salvation of all that are saved, and the destruction of all that are lost. Those who contend that the Scriptures are the primary rule of faith and practice, are certainly bound to support their faith and practice, by plain and clear declarations of Scripture, and not by forced *construction* ; and especially as this construction would militate against the whole scope of Scripture testimony.

We know that detached sentences may be taken from any writing we please, and, by the help of constructions, be made to convey an idea altogether different from that intended by the writer. If we would understand his sentiments, we must take into view his whole design, and not reject the explanations which he gives of his own language.

To those who rest their hopes of salvation on



fore-ordination, it may not be improper to remark, that if their opinions on these subjects are unfounded, the pride of opinion will be a poor compensation for the consequences of the fatal error. In a concern so important as the salvation of the soul, it is certainly unwise to be governed by prejudice, or the bias of education, or previous opinion. Multitudes adhere to opinions once adopted, with a pertinacity that seems to suggest the belief, that to maintain the opinion, is the great and important object in view, without once considering that it *may* be erroneous, and, if erroneous, its effects may be of the most melancholy consequences to themselves and others. If it is a point of true wisdom to examine, with care, our titles to earthly inheritances, how much more important is it to be anxious, and deeply inquiring, in regard to an inheritance of eternal duration !

The apostle Peter, speaking of the Epistles of Paul, says, "In which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned; (in that wisdom which is from above,) and unstable, wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction," 2 Pet. iii. 15, 16. This is an important caution which ought to be borne in mind, whenever we resort to *constructions* of the writings of that eminent apostle. He wrote much in the mystery of divine things. But, as we believe his writings, or rather, that the doctrines of the gospel, do all harmonize, we should have some regard to the grand scope of the whole: seeking also for divine wisdom, which alone can unfold them to the human understanding.

The apostle Paul very frequently mentioned the terms, *election*, *election of grace*, &c., but some have given to these terms a construction, which it does not appear the apostle ever gave them. It does not appear that he ever rejected *obedience* from the work of salvation. We have not sufficient evidence, that he either believed or preached unconditional election and reprobation. Indeed the doctrine does not appear to have been professed in the primitive church. On the contrary, it was several centuries before it was distinctly brought into view.

A leading feature of the heathen philosophy, was the doctrine of *fate* or eternal necessity, which operated on all things, not excepting the supreme Deity himself. As this doctrine had long prevailed among both the Greeks and Romans, and as it was among these very people that it first became denominated a Christian principle, it is easy to discover the school from which it emanated. It still bears the strong marks of its original character, as it was handed down from one heathen philosopher to another, till finally, in the 5th century, it was taken up as an argument against Pelagius, who believed that grace was given in proportion to our merits.\* Much pains have been taken, much zeal

\* “ We may safely call this doctrine a novelty, seeing the first four hundred years after Christ, there is no mention made of it : for as it is contrary to the Scriptures’ testimony, and to the tenor of the Gospel ; so all the ancient writers, teachers, and doctors of the church, passed it over with a profound silence. The first foundations of it were laid in the latter writings of Augustine, who, in his heat against Pelagius, let fall some expressions, which some



and talent displayed, to soften its original features: but still it is not materially changed. The *eternal necessity* bears the same strong, inexorable character that it did in the darkest ages of the world.

On the introduction of the Gospel dispensation, an important change was to take place, in the visible church, as well as in the affusions of spiritual blessings. The institutions which had been given to the Jews, were to cease, and in the coming in of the Gentiles, the former distinctions were to be removed. In order to prepare both Jews and Gentiles for this important change, the apostle brought into view the divine prerogative, and the designs of the Almighty, in making these distinctions. When we consider the strong prejudices of the Jews, and the ideas which had prevailed among the Gentiles, to the time at which the apostle wrote, we shall see the necessity of the labours which he used, to break down the middle wall of partition. And this is the way in which the Epistles to the Romans, Ephesians, &c. were understood at the time. The Gentiles were encouraged and emboldened, to flock as doves to their windows, and the believing Jews, received them as fellow heirs of the same precious promises.

have unhappily gleaned up, to the establishing of this error: thereby contradicting the truth and sufficiently gainsaying many others, and many more and frequent expressions of the same Augustine. Afterwards was this doctrine fomented by Dominicus, a friar, and the monks of his order: and lastly, unhappily, taken up by John Calvin, (otherwise a man in divers respects to be commended,) to the great staining of his reputation, and defamation both of the Protestant and Christian Religion." BARC. APOL. p.111.

I say, this appears to have been the understanding of the passages alluded to, at the time—because such was the *effect*; and the doctrine of election and reprobation, as now held, did not become obvious, till several hundred years afterwards.

The Jews had been a peculiar people; because, to them had been committed the “Oracles of God,” and many favours, designed not only for *their* benefit, but for the benefit of the whole human race. And now the time for the general diffusion of these benefits, had arrived. At the same time, these favours, or this election, (for they were chosen,) did not secure salvation, to the individuals of the Jewish nation—far from it. Many, very many of them, lay under a heavy load of condemnation: and finally, even the nation, as a body, was rejected. Nor did these peculiar favours to the Jews, even during the continuance of that dispensation, exclude the Gentile world from the saving love of God. The apostle bore testimony, that “the works of the law were written in their hearts;” that there were “glory, honor, and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile; for there is no respect of persons with God.” Rom. ii. 15—10. The apostle has not left the subject without a sufficient guard against misconstruction. In the Epistle to the Romans, and in the part of it in which he treats of election, (chap. xi,) he thus clearly asserts, that it is not unconditional: “Thou wilt say then, the branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in.” But this idea he corrects, by telling them, “Because of *un-*



*belief* they were broken off," "and thou standest by faith." Here it was the *unbelief* of the Jews, and not the *secret will* of God, that was the cause of their being rejected. To the (elect) Gentiles, he was equally explicit. "Be not high-minded, but fear." But why tell them to fear, if their salvation and every thing connected with it, was fixed beyond the possibility of change? The apostle tells them: "For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed *lest* He spare not thee." He does not give them any reason to believe, that it made no difference whether they took heed or not: which must have been the case, if the doctrine of unconditional election and reprobation is true. "Behold, therefore the goodness and severity of God! On them which fell, severity:" (because their fall was their *own* act and not his:) "but towards *thee*, goodness, *if thou continue in his goodness, otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.*" But this was without object or utility, unless there had been a possibility both of their "continuing in his goodness," and of their being "cut off." "And they," said he, directing his attention to the Jews, "if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be graffed in, for God is able to graff them in again." All this would have been without meaning, if an irrevocable decree had rendered it impossible for them to believe and be accepted. He might, with much composure of feeling, have resigned both Jews and Gentiles, to the operation of the "eternal necessity," "*Fate*," or "decrees," which ever we may call them. The apostle mentions the exercises and self-denial into

which he was led, “lest that by any means, when he had preached to others, he himself should become a cast away.” 1 Cor. ix. 27. How much below the dignity of the subject, and the character of the apostle, must such expressions have been, if the thing itself had been impossible! Imagine for a moment, the ideas we should form of a man, who should surround himself with candles at mid-day, *lest* the light of the sun should become extinct—or an inhabitant of the mountains, who should employ himself in building towers like Babel, *lest* the ocean should break in upon him—or a mariner at sea, who should hide himself below deck, *lest* the rocks of invisible mountains should fall upon him.—And yet, if the doctrine in question is true, the whole strain of admonition and caution, which has run through every dispensation of God to mankind, is equally inconsistent with the condition of man. Why should we use precautions—*lest* impossibilities should happen? The proposition carries its own refutation with it: and we only need to see it, in its simple, genuine character, to reject it.

It must be borne in mind, whenever the apostle makes use of the terms, *election*, or *reprobation*, that these are not to be understood as *unconditional*, or wholly independent of the faithfulness or unfaithfulness of the individual, when they relate to individuals, or have reference to a future state of existence: for the terms are often applied to nations or national concerns.

Thus, the Jews were *chosen*, that through them



the knowledge of the true God should be preserved, through a dark and idolatrous age. The law, the prophets, and the Messiah, came through them. This was an election. But they were *individually* and *nationally* judged according to their obedience. On the coming of the Messiah, it pleased Divine goodness to call in the Gentiles, to an equal participation of the light of the Gospel. This also was an election, but the Gentiles stood by faith and faithfulness, as evidently appears from the passages already quoted from the epistle to the Romans.

The apostle Peter also establishes the same important truth, in that short but comprehensive admonition to the believers: "Give diligence to make your calling and election sure:" which is predicated on the clear understanding, that their election was *not sure* without this *diligence* on their part.

With these sentiments of the apostles before us, as directly applied by them, to the term *election*, it is easy to understand what is intended by the expressions: "According to the election of grace;" "The purpose of God, according to election," &c. as it is evident that this is *conditional*. And why should any find a difficulty in the idea of *conditional* election: since *election* is nothing more than a *choice*? And who is there that cannot comprehend so simple a proposition, as that we cannot become the chosen of God, and obtain communion and fellowship with him, but in obedience to him? For if *obedience* is indispensably necessary, then obedience must be a *condition* on our part. This

was further illustrated in the parable of the supper. For we may remember that the invitation was given, without ambiguity or counteracting arrangements. No secret impediments were created by him. He sent the invitation. There was no moral or physical impossibility in the way. Nothing prevented the attendance of those first *called*, but their own voluntary choice. They choose to be "excused," and "one went to his farm, and another to his merchandise." They were therefore justly left to their own choice, and thus entered into the state of reprobation.

The general strain of Scripture promises, both in the Old and New Testament, is *conditional*. "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door," Gen. iv. 7.

"Behold I set before you this day a blessing and a curse: a blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day; and a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known," Deut. xi. 26, &c.

"And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do his commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high, above all nations of the earth; and all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the



Lord thy God. Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store. The Lord shall command the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all that thou settest thy hand unto. The Lord shall establish thee an holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, *if* thou shalt keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, and walk in his ways."

"But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes, which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee and overtake thee: cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field, cursed shall be thy basket and thy store; and the heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron."

I have taken only a few verses out of this chapter, (Deut. xxviii.) but it is entirely filled, though it contains 68 verses, with blessings and curses, all conditionally promised and denounced.

"Ask, and ye shall receive, seek, and ye shall find, knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh, receiveth, and he that seeketh, findeth, and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened," Matt. vii. 7, 8.

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord,

shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven," *ib.* 21.

But why need we multiply passages to prove this point? We can scarcely read a chapter in the Bible, without finding this important truth, incorporated in the precepts, or illustrated by the facts recorded in it.

Much stress has been laid on that passage in the Epistle to the Romans, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated," Rom. ix. 13. And, by blending this with a part of the 11th verse of the same chapter, "For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil," &c. an idea is conveyed, that this related personally to Jacob and Esau, the one loved, and the other hated, previous to their being born, or doing any good or evil.

But, by taking the texts as they stand in the Scriptures, and bearing in mind the great objects for which the apostle was labouring, we shall find that the doctrine in question will receive no support from these passages.

In the first place, it may not be improper to quote the language of the apostle, and, in doing this, to remember that he quoted two texts—one from Gen. xxv. 23, and the other from Mal. i. 2, 3, &c. The apostle, after expressing his earnest desire for the salvation of his brethren, and alluding to the high privileges which had been bestowed upon them, adverts to the ground on which they had miserably stumbled: "For," said



he, "they are not all Israel which are of Israel; neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children, but in Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed." In these verses he breaks in upon their vain confidence in an outward and lineal descent from the patriarch, and their expectation of receiving the promises through that claim. He then proceeds, in connexion with the latter part of the passage just quoted, to point them to the true ground of acceptance, which is in Christ: of whom Isaac was a lively type; and who is very appropriately called the son of promise. He then goes on to allude to a text in Gen. xxv. 23. where it is recorded of Rebecca, that she went to seek counsel of the Lord, in relation to her peculiar condition. Then it was that the children not being yet born, nor having done either good or evil—the apostle says, "that the purpose of God might stand, according to election, not of *works*, (on which the Jews so much relied, as if their rituals brought debt on the Almighty,) but of him that calleth, it was said to her, the elder shall serve the younger." The texts in Gen. of which the apostle quoted a part, informed Rebecca that she should be the mother of two nations—that their manners should be different, and that the one should be stronger than the other, and the elder should serve the younger. To the part of this Scripture quoted by the apostle, he adds a text

from Mal. i. 2, &c. which was introduced by the following impressive language, to the rebellious house of Israel: "I have loved you, saith the Lord." Yet they said, "Wherein hast thou loved us?" The responding language runs thus: "Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord: yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste, for the dragons of the wilderness. Whereas Edom saith we are impoverished; but we will return and build the desolate places: thus saith the Lord of Hosts, they shall build, but I will throw down, and they shall call them the border of wickedness."

Thus it is evident that there was, in the passages above quoted, an allusion to nations, and at the very time at which it was said, Jacob have I loved and Esau have I hated, it appears the judgments of the Almighty had been poured out upon Edom, personated by Esau—and that to this nation was applied the striking expression, "the border of wickedness."

"The elder shall serve the younger," could not relate to the *individuals* who *seemed* to be the ostensible objects of the prophecy. For Jacob never exercised authority or dominion over Esau: but first fled from him, and afterwards greatly feared him. But in the giving of the law, and the coming of the Messiah through the descendants of Jacob, there was a fulfilment of this prophecy.

But we often find that passages of Scripture have a mystical and spiritual meaning, as well as one that is more obvious and outward; and this



is peculiarly the case in Rom. ix. 12. "The elder shall serve the younger." Not only did the apostle bring into view the dealings of the Almighty with the Jewish nation, and his divine prerogative to extend his favours to the Gentiles, as well as to the Jews, (a doctrine hard to be borne at that day,) but the two states of man, the first as he stands in the fall, or unregenerate nature, and the second, as the new birth is produced by the operation of Divine Grace, are beautifully typified by Jacob and Esau—the one loved, the other hated. The carnal mind, inseparable from the fallen, corrupt nature, has been, through all ages, at enmity against God, and obnoxious to his displeasure: while he regards, with parental love, the first breathings of the new birth. Nor does the similitude end here; for all our *natural* faculties and propensities must be brought into subjection to the divine principle, if ever we attain to a state of acceptance.

The first and second natures are often brought into view, by instructive metaphors and allegories; "for that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is carnal, and afterwards that which is spiritual." 1 Cor. xv. 46. The apostle dwells largely on this subject, in divers parts of his epistles. Not only Jacob and Esau are mentioned, with allusion to this subject, but Isaac, and Ishmael also. "Cast out the bond woman and her son, for the son of the bond woman shall not inherit with the son of the free woman." Gal. iv. 30. "For in Isaac shall thy seed be called." Rom. ix. 7. "He saith not and to seeds, as of many, but as of one.

And to thy seed, which is Christ." Gal. iii. 16. As the promises are to this *seed*, so in this also stands the election; and we obtain it in no other way, than as we are brought into union with *Him*, who is the "elect of God." We are chosen *in Him*, who was "before the foundation of the world." And thus it is, that God irrevocably wills, that all who come to Him, *through* Jesus Christ—who receive the messages of his love, come into union with Christ, as he saith, "I in you, and you in me," "shall be saved;" "if they continue in his goodness." This is the true ground of election: while some have greatly erred, in supposing that it stood in the individuals, as objects of partial favour, and not as they come into union with "Christ, the elect of God."

Another passage in the same chapter, has been used to establish unconditional election and reprobation: "He will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth." This text asserts the sovereignty of the Deity; a point of doctrine, peculiarly necessary to be insisted on at that time, when all the pride and prejudices of the Jews, revolted at the idea of admitting the Gentiles to be made equal partakers with them, in the blessings and privileges of the Gospel.

The idea which seems to be designed to be drawn from this text, is, that the mercies of God are limited to the *elect*, and the rest are hardened. If this is not the intended inference, I cannot see in what way it can support the doctrine. And there are numerous passages which would destroy such



a construction. "For God hath concluded them all," saith the same apostle, "in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all." Rom. xi. 32. And again: "His tender mercies are over all his works." Psalm cxlv. 6. But why need I quote passages of Scripture, to prove that God has mercy even on the wicked? It will probably not be denied by any—for if we contend that He has mercy on none but the *elect*, we must discharge the reprobate from a heavy portion of their condemnation. If his tender mercies have never been extended to them, they can have very little to account for. Then we may conclude, in the words of the text, that he has "mercy upon all."

It may not be improper now, to make a few remarks on the word, *hardening*.

It is a familiar expression, that "reproof either hardens or softens its object:" though this be actually the effect of other causes, operating on the mind. Thus also, if an individual be loaded with benefits, the genuine tendency of these benefits, is to excite the sensations of gratitude. But if these emotions are resisted or suppressed, *hardness* and ingratitude take place. And this, by way of setting forth the striking depravity of the individual, and as bringing his conduct into *contrast* with the benefits received, is spoken of as produced by those very benefits.

It must also be evident to every reflecting mind, that where light and conviction are resisted, the depravity and condemnation, are in proportion to the grace afforded and rejected. "It was in allusion

to this important fact, that our Lord remarked :  
“ If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness.” Matt. vi. 23.

As “ fallen nature is forward and propense to evil,” and as the grace of God is not resisted but by the powerful influences of temptation, so, when that grace is withdrawn, (the only principle of good in man,) and all his passions, propensities, and the malignant influence of the grand enemy, are let loose without restraint, a deep state of depravity necessarily ensues. In this state of depravity, the knowledge of divine good, which had been communicated, in mercy, and the remembrance of impressions, once tendering in their nature, are now retained, only as recollections to heighten the enmity against God and his devoted servants.

The preaching of the apostles, and even of our Lord himself, while it carried conviction or consolation to the minds of those, whose day of visitation was not over, or who had not totally rejected the day of mercy, had a very different effect on some who heard them. Those very admonitions which wrought conviction in the hearts of some, excited others to envy, almost to madness. And these different effects, were owing to the conditions of the subjects, and not to any thing discordant in the Divine Spirit, from which those admonitions proceeded.

This subject may be further illustrated, by the example of fire, hardening clay, and softening wax; (*Vide Barclay's Apol.* p. 151,) and the genial warmth of the sun, promoting the life and growth



of vegetables, and the putrefaction of animal substances without life.\* The properties and action of the fire are the same, both on the clay and wax: and so is the influence of the sun the same, on the tender vegetables, and on the putrid carcase. But the difference in the subjects, is the cause of the difference in effects produced. Even the same vegetable or animal substance, that, while it had life, was invigorated by the rays of the sun, and the moisture of showers, when deprived of life will be rapidly urged to a state of decomposition, and loathsome putrefaction, by the same agents: the *absence of life*, being the cause of this important difference in effects. And thus the influence of grace, on subjects in whom the divine life is not extinct, will be *tendering*, salutary, and invigorating—tending to salvation. But its operation on those who have done violence to this divine principle, and thus extinguished it in themselves, must necessarily be different. When therefore we adopt that *mode of expression*, which ascribes *hardening* to the Almighty, it must be considered in such a qualified sense, as admits a state of disobedience, and consequent wickedness, preceding.

It will not be denied that the supreme Being, has, at different periods, made warning examples of those who cast off his fear. Men, who have not only rejected the offers of salvation, but become

\* This simile cannot apply to men while progressing towards a state of reprobation: but when they have actually entered into it. For such was the state of those examples in Scripture, that are under consideration.

enemies of all goodness, have been, and no doubt will be, overruled in their purposes and determinations; and been made fit subjects on which to display his just judgments and his power. These, the apostle calls "vessels of wrath:" but it must not be forgotten that they had been "endured with much long-suffering."

Thus it was with the old world, till finally, the sentence was pronounced upon them: "My spirit shall not always strive with man." But it may be recollected that they had attained to such a degree of depravity, that "every imagination of their hearts, was evil only continually:" so that, speaking in the manner of men, it is said: "And it repented the Lord that he had made man upon the earth: and it grieved him at his heart:" Gen. vi. which clearly shows that this depravity was not the effect of the *irresistible, secret will of God*. Thus it was with Sodom. And thus, we believe, it was with Pharaoh and the Egyptians; such also were Korah, Dathan, and their company; the old inhabitants of Canaan; Saul, the first King of Israel, and Herod the last; Judas the traitor, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, at the time of its final overthrow.

Never was there a more signal display of the judgments of the Almighty, than in the case of Jerusalem. In relation to this event, our Lord made this expostulatory appeal: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even



as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not ! Behold your house is left unto you desolate." Matt. xxiii. 37. Never did history record a more dreadful infatuation, blindness, or hardness of heart, than that which possessed the inhabitants of this highly favoured city : and yet, the cause of this hardness, and the calamities which followed it, was—" they loved darkness rather than light." John iii. 19. " He came to his own, but his own received him not."—Though he would often have gathered them as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, (*a striking illustration of parental love,*) yet *they would not* ; and therefore it was that the things which belonged to their peace were hid from their eyes, and an awful desolation came upon them.

The example of Judas is a further illustration of this principle. He was *chosen*—had obtained a part of the ministry of Christ, and was numbered with the twelve : but by *transgression*, fell.

It may be objected, that our Saviour remarks of him : " Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil ?"

But this does not change the view of the subject. The two parts of this sentence relate to different periods of time. The act of choosing was long before the time at which he was called a devil. Two years, or thereabout, before the latter period, he was sent to preach the Gospel, received as full a *commission* as any of the apostles ; and in that commission, he, in common with the others, was empowered " to heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the

dead, and cast out devils," Matt. x. 8. Now our Lord himself clearly proves, that the devil cannot cast out devils, Matt. xii. 26. And therefore Judas, at this time, was not a devil, but an eminently qualified minister of Jesus Christ.

We may also advert, a little more fully, to Saul, as it is evident from the text, that his rejection was in consequence of his *disobedience*. And so of all that ever became monuments of the justice and judgments of God. Indeed it is impossible to be otherwise. "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether," Ps. xix. 9., and therefore the subjects of these must have done despite to the Spirit of grace, and so become abandoned by it, and given up to a reprobate mind.

That such was the process of hardening, in numerous instances recorded in the Holy Scriptures, is evident from the plain, obvious language of the texts. That this explains the dealings of God with man, without involving unconditional decrees, is equally plain. And, if we reason from analogy at all on the subject, we must consider the case of Pharaoh in the same light.

Though it is said of him, "For this purpose have I raised thee up," even this passage does not support the doctrine in question. *To raise up*, is a figurative form of expression. It is applied to recovery from sickness, to the acquisition of power or notice, to the advancement from infancy to manhood, and to many other conditions and changes of condition, but seldom or *never* to being brought into existence. But, in all its various



applications, it shows a state of weakness, imbecility, and dependence on the part of him that is raised, and of power, &c. in him that raises. It has, both literally and figuratively, a strong affinity to *sustain*. So we find the marginal reading, "Made thee to stand up." These expressions, therefore, very strikingly conveyed to Pharaoh his own impotency. For his life, his faculties, and his power, he was dependent on the Almighty. And, when he had openly despised the great Jehovah, and set his own power and authority in opposition to the divine command, then it was that he was sustained in his usual power, brought strikingly into notice, and overthrown in a remarkable manner. Perhaps it may not be improper to state concisely the events of those times. I will begin with the preceding reign. Then it was that the male infants were ordered to be murdered, and a cruel and exterminating policy adopted towards the Hebrews. When this Pharaoh died, his successor, no doubt, pursued the same cruel policy. The Israelites were oppressed, and, at least, as grievously as ever. We must necessarily suppose, that this new king was also a cruel and wicked man. God, now determining to release his Israel from their sufferings, gives Moses his commission. In doing this, he opened to the understanding of this eminent servant, some future events, and among the rest, these expressions occur, "I am sure that (Pharaoh) will not let you go." This was but a revelation from the omniscience of the Deity; and implied no coercion.

On delivering the first message to Pharaoh, he demanded, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice, to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go." He then ordered Moses and Aaron to *their* burdens, and the same day added, beyond any former example, to the severity of the tasks imposed on the Hebrews. After this, occur the expressions, "I will harden Pharaoh's heart."

The query may naturally occur, why does God harden the hearts of the wicked?

The apostle, in the first chapter to the Romans, tells us why it takes place. He begins by testifying, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness. *Because* that which may be known of God, is manifest in them: for God hath shown it unto them." And, referring to the testimony which the visible creation bears to the important truths, of which he was speaking, he adds, "So they are without excuse." And resuming the subject he proceeds, "Because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." "Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, through the lust of their own hearts." "Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature, more than the Creator—for this cause God gave them up to vile affections." "And, even as they did not like to retain God in their



knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient." And, after enumerating many of the gross crimes which mark the reprobate state, he comes to the conclusion, "Who, knowing the judgments of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them." And the next sentence resumes the sentiment, with which the preceding quotations begin, "Therefore, thou art inexcusable, O man! whoever thou art."

Let it be remembered, that these expressions occur in the *first* chapter to the Romans, as if the apostle intended, thus, at the very beginning of his writings, to guard against any misconstruction on this ground.

And, seeing this cause of hardening is so clearly expressed by the apostle, and in so many varied forms of expression, to place it beyond all doubt, why should we attempt to find out another cause, that would equally militate against the whole scope of the Scriptures, and the very attributes of the Deity? It places the justice and goodness of God in a fair point of view: it satisfactorily explains his dealings with us; and places our obedience to his laws, and our responsibility for our actions, on the only rational grounds. And here the pious Christian can repose, without resorting to unconditional decrees.

Nor is it unworthy of remark, that in the 9th chapter to the Romans, which has been supposed to be more conclusively in favour of unconditional

election and reprobation, the apostle makes the following brief summary review: "What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness." This opens the whole ground of the doctrine before us; and when he asks the question, "Wherefore?" it would seem inevitable for him to have replied, "Because the secret will of God had determined it to be so;" if this had been the case. But mark his language: "*Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law.*"

That passage in Acts xiii. 48. where it is said, "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed;" has been supposed very strongly to favour the doctrine of unconditional election and reprobation. But it is only by looking at this passage, through the medium of that doctrine itself, that such a construction can be put upon it.

To suppose that the word "ordained," related to unconditional decrees, existing from all eternity, and securing the salvation of all that are saved, would make this passage convey a meaning, not at all to the purpose, for which it has been advanced. It would go to show, not that the conversion of that day, among the Gentiles, was confined to the elective decrees; but that the *election* was confined to the conversion of that day; and, of course, no further conversion there ever could take place.



“As many as were ordained to eternal life, believed;” consequently, the whole work of conversion there was completed.

But, leaving this consequence, we may return to the word *ordained*, which means, to *appoint*, *put in office*, or *invest with certain powers or privileges*. Thus Matthias was *ordained*, to take part of that ministry and apostleship, from which Judas, by transgression, fell. In this sense also the seven deacons were *ordained*. And yet one of them introduced that offensive doctrine, so emphatically denounced in the Revelations, ii. 6, 15. (*Dupin's Church His. Vol. 1. p. 30.*) The bishops, in the primitive church, were *ordained*; and these again ordained elders, Tit. i. 5. In all these cases we see nothing that conveys the idea of irrevocable decrees. We can speak of ordaining an apostle, a deacon, a bishop, or elder, yet suppose that a preparation for such office was necessary, and of course became a condition; and further conceive, that in case of apostacy, they might become unfit for such office, and be cast out of it.

But if it be said, that the ordinations that have been mentioned were the acts of men, while the other is the act of God: it may be replied, that in those cases which have been quoted, the Holy Spirit did concur, and therefore they are not to be considered as cases of mere human appointment.

But there are cases, purely of divine ordination, which might further illustrate the subject. In the message delivered to David, when he had proposed to build a temple, it is said, “Also I will *ordain*

place for my people, Israel, and will plant them, and they shall dwell in their place, and shall be moved no more," 1 Chron. xvii. 9. And yet this ordaining was evidently conditional; because the temple has been demolished—the nation has been destroyed, and the remnant of the Jewish stock are scattered from that place, through all civilized nations upon the earth.

Cases parallel to this might be found in numerous periods of the Jewish history. But I conceive it unnecessary to multiply quotations of the kind. A few cases however from the New Testament, may not be improper. It is said in Mark, iii. 14, that Jesus "ordained twelve, that they should be with him,"—"and to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils." Judas was one of the twelve: and though he was *ordained* by our Lord Jesus Christ himself, yet he did not retain the office, powers, or privileges, to which he was *ordained*.

In allusion to choosing his disciples from the rest of mankind, and ordaining them to the important mission that has been recited from Mark, our Lord made use of the following expressions to them. "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain." John xv. 16. But if it should be supposed that these expressions had no allusion to Judas, it should be remembered that the same evangelist, vi. 70, relates that Jesus said: "Have not I chosen you *twelve*, and one of you is a devil?" Judas therefore



was *chosen*: was *ordained* of Jesus Christ—to the same high offices with the other apostles—in which he had power to cast out devils—but he kept not the station to which the Lord had ordained him: and came himself, under the power of the devil.

But some may stumble at the terms, *eternal life*. Much of the difficulty in which controverted subjects are involved, arises from inattention to the different ideas, attached to certain terms. Thus the terms *eternal life*, may be understood to relate to the duration of existence. But it is also applied, and seems more properly to belong to that divine principle, which has been denominated by different forms of expression. Thus, it is called Grace, from its being the free gift of God to man, in order to enable him to obtain salvation. It is called Light, from its illuminating nature and effects on the human mind. It is called Life, from the capacities and powers which it communicates to those who receive it. And it may be, and is, called *eternal life*, not only for the last reasons which are given, but also to show its divine source and nature; and that it is, in itself, a living, indestructable principle. In the text before us, I conceive the terms *eternal life*, relate to a *principle*, rather than to the duration of existence. Nor is this exposition new, or unprecedented. There are numerous passages of Scripture that will bear this construction, and some that cannot bear any other. “When Christ, who is our *life*, shall appear.” Col. iii. 4. “The power of an *endless* life.” vii. 16. “Thou hast the words of *eternal life*.” John vi. 68.

“ This is *life eternal*, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” *ib.* 17. 3. “ This is the true God and *eternal life*.” 1 John v. 20. “ No murderer hath *eternal life* abiding in him.” *ib.* iii. 15. This last passage, is very conclusive on the point, and cannot be construed in any other way. The apostle, speaking of the Word, and his incarnation, says: “ In him was life; and the life was the light of men.” John i. 4. The same inspired writer, also uses the expressions: “ For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bare witness, and show unto you THAT *eternal life*, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.” 1 John i. 2. And as this Grace, Light, and Life, (to which the epithet *eternal*, so properly belongs,) may visit, influence, and animate us—as we may be placed in it as in a new capacity, power, or office, we may, by a mode of expression, analogous to those cases already quoted, be said to be chosen, appointed, or ordained to it. But though this life itself is eternal, yet, after possessing it, we may be separated from it, and that separation be properly denominated death. (*Vide Art. Perseverance.*)

The meaning of the passage, quoted from the Acts, I conceive, amounts simply to this: that as many as received, or were invested with, or come under the influence of the divine principle, “ *believed*.” For I cannot suppose, that we are to infer any more from this passage, than that these Gentiles, on hearing the glad tidings of the Gospel, preached by the apostles, and under the influence



of that Grace which brings salvation, had become ingrafted into the true Church, and placed precisely on a footing with those to whom it was said: "If thou continue in his goodness, otherwise thou also shalt be cut off."

We do not represent the Supreme Being, as bringing mankind into existence, for the very purpose of making them miserable to all eternity: or calling on them for the performance of certain duties, and, at the same time, rendering obedience absolutely impossible, and punishing them to all eternity, for what was the effect of his own irresistible, *secret will*. Such an idea is too shocking to be ascribed to infinite goodness.

But if it be said that the disobedience of sinners, though under the direction of the secret will of God, is still voluntary. It may be replied, that this is too plain a contradiction to be offered to even the lowest capacity. As well might we talk of the voluntary act of a machine, or the voluntary or wilful movement of a cloud. It is all the effect of *force*, which the subject has neither power nor will to resist.

If it be said that the will of the creature is in accordance with the *secret will* of God: I answer, so much the more is he an object of acceptance, not of punishment. But what ideas can men entertain of the Deity, to suppose that his *secret and revealed will* are different! That he pretends to *will* one thing, and *secretly wills* another.—That there is no reality in the revealed will—it is nothing but an appearance, and yet, that an unde-

viating performance of the secret will—which is nothing more than his real will, is to draw down his judgments and everlasting wrath!!!

It has been urged by some, that God does not work without a plan—and that predestination is nothing more than the plan of divine operations.

Suppose we admit that the Supreme Ruler of the Universe, does not work without a plan: it does not follow that unconditional election and reprobation is that plan. Such a conclusion could not be drawn without proving that such a plan would be consistent with the attributes of the Deity, and also, that the doctrine of free agency would not. But this has not been done. On the other hand, it may be urged, both from Scripture and from reason, that the plan which the Almighty has laid down, for the government of his rational creatures, is, that man should be free to choose and to act—instructed in his duty—enabled to perform it, and made subject to the consequences.

It has also been supposed, that as the Deity fore-knows all things—what is certainly fore-known, must certainly come to pass.

All those who have pretended to digest the doctrine into any thing like a system, and all who have held it so digested, have distinguished between the fore-knowledge of the Deity, and his decrees. The one is an *attribute*, the other an *act*. The prescience of the Almighty is as much an attribute as his *power*, and must have existed from all eternity. But it would seem that a decree necessarily implied an *act*: an act necessarily required a *time*



at which it was performed—begun and finished. But how will this accord with the idea of its having existed from all eternity? And if the prescience existed before the decrees, then what is fore-known is not necessarily decreed. Calvin\* did not rely on the argument of fore-knowledge, to establish the doctrine of the decrees. At that day there was a doctrine which Calvin seemed more careful to oppose, than that of free will—it was the merit of works. And as he apprehended it might be supposed, that the Almighty, fore-knowing the course of conduct which each individual would pursue, had fixed his election or reprobation, according to the works *fore-known*—he contended that the decrees were totally irrespective of the fore-knowledge, or of the moral condition of the subjects.

In thus distinguishing between the decrees and

\* His words are: “ But many persons involve this doctrine in difficulties, and especially those who pretend to found it upon the Divine Prescience. Both of these things we establish, that God foresees all, and that he disposes of all; but we maintain that it confounds every thing, to subject the PREDESTINATION of God to his PRESCIENCE.”

MACKENZIE'S LIFE OF CALVIN, p. 242.

“ We cannot suppose Him to have fore-known any thing, which He had not PREVIOUSLY decreed, without setting up a series of causes, *EXTRA DEUM*, and making the Deity dependent for a great part of the knowledge he has, upon the will and works of his creatures, and upon a combination of circumstances exterior to himself. Therefore, his determinate plan, counsel, and purpose, (i. e. his own predestination of causes and effects,) is the only basis of his fore-knowledge, which fore-knowledge could neither be certain, nor independent, but as founded on his OWN ANTECEDENT decree.”

TOPLADY, p. 100.

the fore-knowledge of God, and asserting that such decrees are not dependent on this fore-knowledge, he entirely destroys the force of the argument which has been drawn from that source. For if the existence of such decrees be denied, those who confess that they are not dependent on fore-knowledge, cannot refer to that fore-knowledge as an evidence of their existence.

Some of the disciples of Calvin, explain his opinions by saying, that, "Intelligent beings first determine on a purpose, and then know that it will be accomplished."

If we apply this proposition to the Deity, and it certainly can apply to no other being—it will follow, that his *Prescience* did not exist from all eternity. For that could not have been of eternal duration, which was preceded by any event whatever. Thus we are led back to a period, in which, according to this view, one of the attributes of the Deity did not exist.

In tracing these various arguments to their natural consequences, my mind revolts at the ideas which are necessarily excited. It is painful too, to my feelings, to canvass the principles of any society, with freedom. I feel no sectarian animosity. I know and esteem many individuals who hold this very doctrine. But while I acknowledge the obligations of charity, I hope it will not be a cause of offence, if I am found also in the exercise of Christian solicitude, for their eternal happiness. This solicitude prompts me to the investigation of



the subject before us, and freely to develop its character and consequences.

And here, I would drop a caution, against a boldness which is sometimes discoverable, in attempting to bring down divine attributes, to the level of human comprehension. It is done in the doctrines of infidelity, as well as in those of predestination. In the former it has been levelled against revealed religion, and all the mysteries it embraces—in the latter, it offers an indignity to the Divine Character. Among the very objectionable consequences and imputations which necessarily follow from it, it represents the fore-knowledge very far below perfection, by confining it merely to what is decreed. Besides this, it denies the justice and mercy of the Almighty. It is true the professors of the doctrine do not acknowledge these consequences, but they follow from it as inevitably as mathematical demonstrations.

And how dare we call these Divine Attributes in question? Do not our very hopes of heaven and happiness depend on these? Banish these from our minds and our prospects are wrapped in gloom. We no longer look up to a God, hearing prayer, but to an inexorable Being, whom neither prayers nor intercessions can move. The uncertainty of *our* being of the elect number, must still cross our minds with inexpressible horror. Notwithstanding the powerful invitations which we may feel, to become heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, we still may suppose, he has bid us seek his face

in vain; and only gives these invitations to increase our condemnation, and aggravate our final misery.

The justice of his judgments, and the riches of his mercy, have been displayed through all generations on earth, and they will be proclaimed in the anthems of the redeemed in heaven.

I shall conclude by appealing to the universal experience of mankind; for I am persuaded that I may assert without fear of contradiction, that every man who has come to feel the powerful operation of Redeeming Love, rising into predominance in his own heart, feels therein, an extension of good will to the whole human family, and a desire for the salvation of *all*; in the language of Scripture, “not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance and live.”\* And in proportion as we come under the influence of the

\* But what shall we say of such sentiments as the following? Do they not seem to represent the SMALLNESS of the number of those that are saved, as a source of gratification to the elect—and even as enhancing their happiness?

“For by not adopting indifferently the whole world to the hope of salvation; but by giving to some, what he refuses to others, he, by this comparison of his grace, renders it more estimable, and more illustrious.”

CALVIN, INST. LIB. 3, ch. 21.

“In other cases, the VALUE of a privilege or possession, is enhanced by its SCARCENESS. A VIRTUOSO sets but little esteem on a medal, a statue, or a vase, so common, that every man who pleases, may have one of the same kind: he prizes that alone as a rarity, which really is such; and which is not only intrinsically valuable, but which lies in FEW HANDS. Were all men here on earth qualified and enabled to appear as kings, the crown, the



spirit of him who laid down his life for us, so this love and desire for the salvation of all men becomes powerful in us. And is it to be supposed that *our* love for mankind, *our* feelings of pity, commiseration, and desire for their salvation, should be thus enlarged, if the Love of God, and the means of salvation, were restricted to the narrow limits which have been supposed, on the predestinarian scheme? It is impossible. Effects cannot exceed their cause; nor any feeling of love or good will, or desire for the salvation of souls, rise in us, superior to the inexhaustible source of the Love of God in Christ Jesus, from which alone it is derived in us.

Nor is this the only evidence we find within ourselves. And here I can make a similar appeal: whether every man who is capable of rational reflection, does not feel himself in the full exercise of free agency? Is he not conscious of a discrimination between right and wrong? Does he not feel the solemn obligations of duty? Is there not a conviction on his mind, that a God, all goodness, does not require impossibilities of him; but in fatherly regard, invites him to love and gratitude, and finally to an inheritance eternal in the heavens? And when, at any time, he has gone counter sceptre, the robe of state, and other ensigns of majesty, would presently sink into things hardly noticeable."

TOPLADY, PREFACE, p. 8.

And these comparisons he brings forward, to illustrate the "reflections," &c. "of such persons as are favoured with a sense of their ELECTION in Christ to holiness and heaven." *ib.*

to the convictions in his own bosom, does he not feel that he is left without excuse—that the grace afforded—the evidences of sin, and ability to resist temptation, were sufficient for him?

We acknowledge unhesitatingly that God is good, that he is not a hard master, or an austere man, taking up where he has not laid down, and gathering where he has not strewed. And when our minds are addressed with the language, “As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live,” Ezek. xxxiii. 11, we may respond with the apostle, “let God be true, but every man a liar.” Rom. iii. 4.



## CHAP. IV.

### OF THE DIVINITY OF JESUS CHRIST.

ALTHOUGH the preceding articles have all an allusion and direct reference to Jesus Christ, and salvation by Him, for He is the only means and way of salvation, and the foundation of every Christian doctrine, yet it seems necessary to say something more distinct and particular, in relation to that divine character.

The Society of Friends, from the beginning, have believed in the Divinity and humanity of Christ. The history of his miraculous conception, birth, life, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension, as recorded by the Evangelists, we fully believe.

A few extracts from the writings of some of the most distinguished members of the society, may probably be the best introduction to this article.

G. Fox, in his journal, vol. 1, p. 4, says: "This priest Stevens, asked me, why Christ cried out upon the cross: 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' and why he said, 'If it be possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not my will but thine be done.' I told him, at that time the sins of all mankind were upon him, and their

iniquities and transgressions, with which he was wounded, which he was to bear, and to be an offering for, as he was man, but died not as he was God: so, in that he died for all men, tasting death for every man, he was an offering for the sins of the whole world. This I spoke, being at that time, in a measure, sensible of Christ's sufferings."

In a publication about the year 1675, entitled, *A Testimony of what we believe of Christ*, he says, "The apostle, speaking of the fathers, saith, 'Of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is God over all, blessed for ever. Amen.' This was the apostles' doctrine to the church then, which we do witness, both as to his flesh, and as he was God."

G. Fox and others, in an address to the Governor of Barbadoes, (*Vide Journal, Vol. 2. p. 139.*) says, "We own and believe in Jesus Christ, his beloved and only begotten Son, in whom he is well pleased: who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary, in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: who is the express image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature, by whom were all things created, that are in heaven and in earth, visible or invisible, whether they be thrones, dominions, principalities, or powers, all things were created by Him. And we own and believe, that he was made a sacrifice for sin, who knew no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: that he was crucified for us in the flesh, without the gates



of Jerusalem, and that he was buried, and rose again the third day, by the power of the Father, for our justification, and that he ascended up into heaven, and now sitteth at the right hand of God. This Jesus, who was the foundation of the prophets and apostles, is our foundation, and we believe there is no other foundation to be laid, but that which is laid, even Christ Jesus: who tasted death for every man, shed his blood for all men, is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”—“He is, (as the Scriptures of truth say of him,) our wisdom, righteousness, justification, and redemption, neither is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given amongst men, whereby we may be saved.”—“He is now come in spirit, and hath given us an understanding, that we know him that is true. He rules in our hearts by his law of love and life, and makes us free from the law of sin and death.”

I. Pennington, Vol. 1, p. 694, 4to ed. says, “It is objected against us, who are called Quakers, that we deny Christ, and look not to be saved by him, as he was manifested without us: but look only to be saved by Christ within us: to which it is in my heart to answer, to such as singly desire satisfaction therein.”

“We do indeed expect to be saved, by the revelation and operation of the life of Christ within us; yet not without relation to what he did without us, for all that he did in that body of flesh, was of the Father, and had its place and service in the

will, and according to the counsel of the Father.”

In another treatise, entitled, “Flesh and Blood of Christ,” Vol. 2, p. 256, he says, “Now as touching the outward, which ye say we deny, because of our testimony to the inward, I have frequently given a most solemn testimony thereto: and God knoweth it to be the truth of my heart, and that the testifying to the inward doth not make the outward void, but rather establish it in its place and service. God himself, who knew what virtue was in the inward, yet hath pleased to make use of the outward; and who may contradict, and slight his wisdom and counsel therein? It was a spotless sacrifice of great value, and effectual for the remission of sins; and I do acknowledge unto the Lord, the remission of my sins thereby: and bless the Lord for it: even for giving up his Son to die for us all.”

William Penn, Vol. 5, p. 310, says, “We cannot believe that Christ’s death and sufferings so satisfy God, or justify men, as that they are *thereby* accepted of God. They are indeed put into a *state*, capable of being accepted of God, and, through the obedience of faith and sanctification of the spirit, are in a state of acceptance.” “And though Christ did *die* for us, yet we must, through the aid of his grace, work out our salvation with fear and trembling. As *he* died for sin, so *we* must die *to sin*, or we cannot be said to be saved by the death and sufferings of Christ.”

“We do believe that Jesus Christ was our holy *sacrifice*, atonement, and propitiation: that he bore



our iniquities, and by his stripes, we were healed of the wounds *Adam* gave us in his fall: and that God is just in forgiving true penitents, upon the credit of that holy offering Christ made of himself to God, for us: and that what he did and suffered, satisfied and pleased God: and that through the offering up of himself once for all, through the eternal Spirit, he hath for ever perfected those, (in all times,) that were sanctified; who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." *Vide Rom. viii. 1.*

"In short, justification consists in two parts, or hath a two-fold consideration: viz. justification from the guilt of sin, and justification from the power and pollutions of sin;"—"The first part of justification, we do reverently and humbly acknowledge, is only for the sake of the death and sufferings of Christ. Nothing *we* can do, *though by the operation of the Holy Spirit*, being able to cancel *old debts*, or wipe out old scores: it is the power and efficacy of that propitiatory offering, upon *faith* and *repentance*, that justifies us from the sins of the past: and it is the power of Christ's Spirit in our hearts, that purifies and makes us acceptable before God."

In a paper presented to parliament, in the year 1693, signed by 31 of our primitive friends, among whom was G. Whitehead, it is declared:

"1. That Jesus of Nazareth, who was born of the Virgin Mary, is the true Messiah, the very Christ, the Son of the living God, to whom all the prophets gave witness: and that we do highly

value his death, sufferings, works, offices, and merits, for the redemption of mankind, together with his laws, doctrines, and ministry."

"2. That this very Christ of God, who is the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world, was slain, was dead, and is alive, and lives for ever in his divine glory, dominion, and power, with the Father." \* \* \*

"And we know of no other doctrine or principle, preached, maintained, or ever received among or by us, since we were a people, contrary to these aforesaid." (*Sewel's His. fol. ed. p. 626.*)

R. Barclay, in his Apology, page 141, expresses himself thus: "We do not hereby intend any way to lessen or derogate from the atonement and sacrifice of Jesus Christ, but, on the contrary, do magnify and exalt it. For, as we believe, all those things have been certainly transacted, which are recorded in the Holy Scriptures, concerning the birth, life, miracles, sufferings, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, so we do also believe, that it is the duty of every one to believe it, to whom it pleases God to reveal the same, and to bring them to the knowledge of it. As we firmly believe it was necessary, that Christ should come, that by his death and sufferings, he might offer himself up a sacrifice to God, for our sins, who his own self bare our sins, in his own body on the tree, so we believe the remission of sins, which any partake of, is only in, and by virtue of, that most satisfactory sacrifice, and no otherwise."

About the year 1699, G. Keith, having left the



Society of Friends, and become an inveterate opposer, wrote a book which he called, "The Deism of William Penn and his brethren." W. Penn being then in America, Thomas Ellwood commenced a reply to this book. But B. Coole publishing an answer to Keith, Ellwood's was never finished, and we have only some extracts from it in his journal; p. 405 to 414. In that reply he says, "The book of William Penn's called, 'A Discourse of the General Rule of Faith and Life;' to which G. Keith's Deism is an answer, was first printed in the year 1673, as an Appendix to W. Penn's part of the Christian Quaker, (a folio book in two parts, the former written by W. Penn, the latter by G. Whitehead.) In that former part of the Christian Quaker, written by W. Penn, though the tendency of it is to assert and defend the Divinity of Christ, and his spiritual appearance, by his divine light in the hearts of men, yet there is enough said concerning his manhood, his outward appearance, and sufferings in the flesh, to free W. Penn from the imputation or suspicion of deism. W. Penn, p. 102, says, 'His righteous life, with respect to its appearance in that body, was grieved by sin; and the weight of the iniquity of the whole world, with the concernment of its eternal well-being, lay hard upon Him: nor was his manhood insensible of it: under the load of this did he travail: alone he trod the wine-press, &c. Not that we should irreverently rob the holy body, of whatsoever acknowledgment is justly due, nor yet separate what God hath joined,' P. 104,

chap. 21, 'A confession in particular, to Christ's redemption, remission, justification, and salvation—which was actually to the salvation of some, and intentionally of the whole world. As there was a necessity that one should die for the people, so whoever then or since believed in him, had, and have, a seal or confirmation, of the remission of their sins in his blood. This grand assurance of remission do all receive, in the ratifying blood of Christ, who, repenting of their sins, believe and obey the holy light, with which He hath illuminated them.' P. 107, 'But there is yet a further benefit that accrueth by the blood of Christ, viz. That Christ is a propitiation and redemption to such as have faith in him. For though I still place the stress of particular benefit upon the light, life, and Spirit, revealed and witnessed in every particular: yet in that general appearance there was a general benefit, justly to be attributed to the blood of that very body of Christ: *to wit*: that it did propitiate. For however it might draw stupendous judgments upon the heads of those who were authors of that dismal tragedy, and died impenitent, yet doubtless it thus far turned to very great account, in that it was a most precious offering in the sight of the Lord, and drew God's love the more eminently to mankind: at least, such as should believe in his name.' P. 108, 'Doubtless it did greatly influence to some singular tenderness and peculiar regard, unto all such as should believe in his name, among other his weighty performances; for the sake of that last and greatest of all his external acts, the



*resisting unto blood*, for the spiritual good of the world, thereby offering his life upon the cross, through the power of the eternal Spirit, that remission of sin, God's bounty to the world, might be preached in his name, and in his very blood too: as that which was most ratifying of all his bodily sufferings. And indeed therefore might it seem meet to the Holy Ghost, that redemption, propitiation, and remission, should be declared, and held forth in the blood of Christ, unto all that have a right faith therein, as saith the apostle to the Romans—because it implies a firm belief that Christ was come in the flesh, and that none could then have him as their propitiation and redemption, who withstood the acknowledgment of, and belief in his visible appearance.' P. 110, 'Faith in his blood was requisite, that they might confess him, whose body and blood it was to be Christ. To conclude, we confess; he who then appeared *was*, and *is* the propitiation, &c. And in him was redemption obtained, by all those who had such true faith in his blood.'"

After T. E. had taken the above extracts, with considerably more to the same purpose, he says, "Thus much, (and more which I have omitted,) against Deism, in that very treatise of W. Penn's, to which the book, out of which G. Keith, by his art of counterfeit chemistry, would extract Deism, was an appendix: and yet this was not the direct subject of that treatise, but only touched on occasionally, or by the by. Should I gather up all quotations on this argument, out of

our other books, such especially, as have more directly handled this subject, I might therewith fill a large volume."

And, after quoting a large number of texts, in support of this doctrine, he adds, "These things, G. Keith certainly knows, have been constantly held, believed, professed, and owned by W. Penn, and his brethren, the Quakers, in general, both privately and publicly, in word and writing. These things are so often testified of in our meetings, and have been so fully and plainly asserted and held forth in our books, that we might call in almost as many witnesses thereof, as have frequented our meetings, or attentively read our books."

To these testimonies from the writings of our primitive friends, I will add a few from the society in its collective capacity. The Epistle from the Yearly Meeting in London, written in the year 1723, to the Quarterly and Monthly Meetings of Friends, in Great Britain, Ireland, and elsewhere, contains the following advice:

"And, dear Friends, this Meeting, considering that some, in the present age, do endeavour, as well by certain books, as a licentious conversation, to lessen and decry the true faith in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, even that precious faith once delivered to his saints—which, by the mercy of God, is also bestowed upon us, doth therefore earnestly advise and exhort all parents, masters, and mistresses of families, and guardians of minors, that they prevent, as much as in them lies, their



children, servants, and youth, under their respective care and tuition, from the having or reading books or papers, that have any tendency to prejudice the profession of the Christian religion, to create in them the least doubt concerning the truth of the Holy Scriptures, or those necessary and saving truths contained in them."

1728. "And, dear Friends, inasmuch as the Holy Scriptures are the external means of conveying, and preserving to us, an account of the things most surely to be believed, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in the flesh, and the fulfilling the prophecies relating thereto; we therefore recommend to all Friends, especially elders in the church, and masters of families, that they would, both by example and advice, impress on the minds of the younger a reverend esteem of those sacred writings; and advise them to a frequent reading and meditating therein. And that ministers, as well as elders and others, in all their preaching, writing, and conversing about the things of God, do keep to the form of sound words, or Scripture terms; and that none pretend to be wise above what is there written, and, in such pretended wisdom, go about to explain the things of God, in the words which man's wisdom teaches."

1732. "We tenderly and earnestly advise and exhort all parents and masters of families, that they exert themselves, in the wisdom of God, and in the strength of his love, to instruct their children and families, in the doctrines and precepts of

the Christian religion, contained in the Holy Scriptures; and, that they excite them to the diligent reading of those sacred writings, which plainly set forth the miraculous conception, birth, holy life, wonderful works, blessed example, meritorious death, and glorious resurrection, ascension, and mediation of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and to educate their children in the belief of those important truths, as well as in the belief of the inward manifestation and operation of the Spirit of God on their own minds, that they may reap the benefit and advantage thereof, for their own peace and everlasting happiness, which is infinitely preferable to all other considerations. We therefore exhort, in the most earnest manner, that all be very careful in this respect; a neglect herein being, in our judgment, very blame-worthy: and further, where any deficiency of this sort appears, we recommend to Monthly and Quarterly Meetings, that they stir up those whom it may concern to their duty herein."

1736. "We earnestly exhort, that ye hold fast the profession of the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, without wavering; both in respect to his outward coming in the flesh, his sufferings, death, resurrection, ascension, mediation, and intercession, at the right hand of the Father: and to the inward manifestations of his grace and Holy Spirit in our hearts, powerfully working in the soul of man, to the subduing every evil affection and lust, and to the purifying of our consciences from dead works, to serve the living God: and that, through the



virtue and efficacy of this most holy faith, ye may become strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might."

1800. "There were of old, those who brought children to Christ, in the days of his flesh; and now the religious parent can breathe no warmer aspirations for his tender offspring, than when he spiritually commends them to the protection of his Lord. But see, friends, that you encourage no propensities in them, which prevent a union with him. Restrain them, we beseech you, from associating with those whose influence and example lead away from his law: and, be especially careful that you introduce not among them, publications, which are, either wholly or in part, repugnant to the faith as it is in Jesus."—"And, finally, Friends, of every age, of every rank, we commend you to the protection of Him who died for us, and who ever liveth to make intercession for us, who is able to save them to the uttermost that come to God by him."

In the years 1730, 31, and 32, Alexander Arscott published, in three parts, a work which he called, "Considerations relating to the present state of the Christian Religion," in which he says, "Christ, the author of the Christian religion, is to be considered under a two-fold character—as man, who was born of the Virgin Mary—suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; and as God, in which sense he was in the beginning, before all worlds, and is called, in

Scripture, the Word, the Wisdom, and the power of God."

"And, as what Christ did and suffered for mankind was necessary, by the appointment of God the Father, for their reconciliation to him; notwithstanding their sins and trespasses against him; so his presence with them, and *in* them, is necessary for their overcoming sin, and bringing them into a state of holiness and acceptance with him; and this latter is as truly a part of the Christian religion as the first: and both, taken together, make up the whole, entire Christian religion."

Henry Tuke, (of England,) in his treatise of the Principles of Religion, (N. York ed. 1805,) p. 39, says, "The Christian religion teaches, that our first parents, having sinned and lost the divine image, the fallen nature became so predominant, that it was by them transferred to their offspring: but, in order that man might be restored to favour, and to a state of purity, it pleased the Almighty to promise and send a Redeemer, whose sacrifice of himself he saw meet to accept, as the means of reconciliation and forgiveness of sins: hereby putting an end to all those sacrifices, which, from the fall, or very soon after, to the time when Christ thus offered up himself, had been adopted as the means of obtaining acceptance with God. And, though we cannot trace this practice to a divine command, earlier than the time of Moses; yet the universal adoption of it by the religious, of all ages, is a strong implication that it was of divine origin, instituted in reference to that 'one offering



by which God hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.'

"Thus the chief objects of the coming of Christ, evidently appear to have been, first, by the sacrifice of himself, to make atonement to God for us and to become the Mediator between God and man. Secondly, by the sanctifying operation of the Holy Spirit, 'to finish transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to bring in everlasting righteousness:' and, thirdly, by putting an end to the legal dispensation, and, as the apostle expresses it, 'Blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances, that was against us,' to lead mankind to a more pure and spiritual worship of the divine Being."

The evangelist John introduces the history of the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, by a most striking testimony to his Divinity. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word *was* God.

"The same was in the beginning with God.

"All things were made by him: and without him was not any thing made that was made.

"In him was life, and the life was the light of men."

"He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us."

Christ said of himself, "Before Abraham was, I am," John viii. 58. And again, "I and my Father are one," *ib.* x. 30.

The apostle Paul says, 1 Tim. iii. 16, "God was manifest in the flesh: justified in the spirit,

seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." And in another place he says, "Of whom, concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever," Rom. ix. 5. In the 1st chapter of Heb. v. 8, he quotes a passage from Psalms, with application to Jesus Christ: "But unto the Son he saith, thy throne, O God ! is for ever and ever."

The prophet, speaking of his advent, says, "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the *Mighty God*, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end," Isa. ix. 6, 7.

For the redemption of fallen man, he condescended to be "made flesh," or "take flesh and dwell among us," as it is written, "A body hast thou prepared me." "For verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham," &c. In thus being "made flesh," or "taking flesh," with its feelings and susceptibility of suffering and of death, and in submitting to be tempted as we are, he was said to be "made like unto his brethren," Heb. ii. 17. And yet, we do not, from these expressions, call his divinity in question.

"Beware," said the apostle, "lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ; for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, who is the head of all principality and power," Col. ii. 8, 9, 10.



“Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father,” Phil. ii. 9, 10, 11.

It is not necessary to enter into a statement of what constitutes the *human* character, to draw a contrast between this and the character of Jesus Christ; for, though he was man, yet he was *more than man*: the divine nature *essentially* belonged to him.

Thus it was said, “A body hast thou prepared *me*,” Heb. x. 5. And again, “Before Abraham was, *I am*.” “*I and my Father are one*.” “He that hath seen *me*, hath seen the Father.” In all these passages, and many more which might be mentioned, in which there is an obvious and necessary reference to his outward appearance, there is, at the same time, a direct application of the personal pronouns to the Divinity.

Neither saints on earth, nor angels in heaven, have been proper objects of worship; but worship was paid to him, not only after his ascension, but while he walked among men. The apostle, in reference to this view of the subject, says, “When he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith, and let all the angels of God worship him,” Heb. i. 6.

When the wise men, led by a star, were come into the house where Christ was born, “they saw

the young child, with Mary, his mother, and fell down and *worshipped* him," Matt. ii. 11. "The leper came and worshipped him," *ib.* viii. 2. "They that were in the ship came and worshipped him," *ib.* xiv. 33. "The woman of Canaan came and worshipped him," *ib.* xv. 25. "The man came out of the tombs, and worshipped him," Mark v. 6. The blind man believed and worshipped, John ix. 38. When he entered Jerusalem, the multitude that were with him worshipped him—spreading their garments in the way, and singing hosanna in the highest," Matt. xxi. 9, 15. And, after his resurrection, but before his ascension, "his disciples held him by the feet, and worshipped him," Matt. xxviii. 9. And again, in v. 17, it is said, "his disciples worshipped him." When Stephen was suffering death, as a martyr, he worshipped, saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

But Peter refused to be worshipped, saying, "I am a man." Paul and Barnabas, when the men of Lystra were about to offer divine honours to them, rent their clothes, and ran in among them to prevent it, saying, they were men of like passions with others. And John, when some deep mysteries were revealed, was about to worship the angel, but he prevented him, saying, "See thou do it not: I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus—worship God," Rev. xix. 10, also xxii. 8, 9.

Thus it is evident, that our Lord Jesus Christ did not stand simply in the character of man.



But there is another important point, to which we must direct our attention. He was our Redeemer, Mediator, and propitiatory sacrifice. These offices belonged to him, and to no other.

He tasted death for every man, Heb. ii. 9. "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him." "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins," 1 John iv. 9, 10. "And we have seen, and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world," v. 14. And in the next verse he applies these texts to Jesus Christ, in such a manner, that they cannot be understood as relating *exclusively* to his spiritual appearance. In the 14th verse, he testifies that the Son was sent to be the Saviour of the world—and in the 15th he bears testimony that *Jesus* was that Son. And he is spoken of, throughout the New Testament, as the *only* person who ever stood in the *same* relation.

As the Society of Friends have always professed and believed in the Divinity of Jesus Christ, it may possibly, by some of these, be considered unnecessary for me, on the present occasion, to dwell on this subject. But, as this treatise will probably fall into the hands of others for perusal, and as there are various ideas in the world respecting the character of Jesus Christ, the objects of his coming, and the benefits derived from his advent—his sufferings and death, I hope

I shall be permitted to add some additional observations and evidences, on these important points.

We have seen already, from the most indubitable testimony of Scripture, that attributes were ascribed, epithets were given, and worship paid to Him, which neither men nor angels can receive; and therefore we do not place his character on a level with created beings.

And, on entering into a consideration of the momentous objects of his coming, and the benefits he has conferred upon man, it seems necessary to take a slight view of the dispensations which preceded his advent.

The apostle, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, ix. 25, 26, says, “Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once, in the end of the world, hath he appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

“But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building: neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us,” *ib.* xi. 12.

In these passages there is an allusion to the dispensation of the law.

For, in the early ages of the world, after man



had fallen from his original purity, it pleased Almighty God, in condescension to the low and carnal state of the human family, by different dispensations, gradually to lead them to Christ. They were not prepared, in early ages, for a dispensation purely spiritual: nor for that display of light which Jesus Christ would introduce at his coming.

In the beginning of these dispensations, an intimation was given of a Saviour. He is promised in the very sentence pronounced on our prime ancestors. The promise was renewed in a remarkable manner to Abraham: "In thy *seed* shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." This *seed*, the apostle says, was Christ, Gal. iii. 16. Jacob also, in the visions of light, saw the coming of the Messiah. "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, till Shiloh come, and to him shall the gathering of the people be," Gen. xlix. 10.

Moses too bore testimony to the children of Israel, that the Lord their God would raise up a Prophet, whom they were to hear in all things, under the penalty of being cut off, Deut. xviii. 15, 18.

The law, which was given by Moses, abounds with types and shadows, pointing to the coming of Christ, in relation both to his outward and inward appearance.

The apostle, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, as well as in many other places, dwells largely on the relation which the types and shadows of the law had to Christ.

In the 9th chapter of that Epistle, he expresses himself thus: "Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary. For there was a tabernacle made, the first wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shew bread, which is called the sanctuary: and after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the holiest of all; which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; and over it the cherubims of glory, shadowing the mercy-seat: of which we cannot now speak particularly. Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God: but into the second went the high priest alone, once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: the Holy Ghost thus signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertained to the conscience; which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation. But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say,



not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood; he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others, for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once, in the end of the world, hath he appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And, as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation."

And in the 10th chapter of the same Epistle, after showing the insufficiency of the sacrifices of the law, and the impossibility of their taking away sin; and adverting to the coming of Christ, he says, "Then said he, lo, I come, to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

Having shown that many of the institutions of the law had reference to the *outward*, as well as to the inward appearance of Christ, and to what he did and suffered, as well as to what he still does by his Spirit and power in our hearts: it may not

be improper to adduce some texts, to show that the striking events of his life and death were necessary, and in the counsels of infinite wisdom.

The prophets spoke of his humiliation and death, not only as events to come, but as those in which we have a deep interest.

Isa. liii. 1, "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?"

3. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

4. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

5. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

6. All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

7. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted; yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

8. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

10. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his



soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.

11. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

12. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death; and he was numbered with the transgressors: and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

Thus the evangelical prophet not only foretold the sufferings of Christ, as it was afterwards literally fulfilled, by the unbelieving Jews, but he clearly declares these events, so far as related to our Saviour himself, to be of divine appointment. It is proper here to observe, that a distinction may be drawn between the *event*, and the *agents* by which that event was effected. But to this part of the subject, I shall speak more particularly in another place.

The apostles and primitive believers considered the subject in the same point of view that is here intended.

Peter, on the day of Pentecost, in bearing his testimony to Jesus of Nazareth, said: "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain; whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because

it was not possible that he should be holden of it.” Acts ii. 23, 24. The same eminent apostle bore a similar testimony to the people, who came together, in consequence of the miracle performed in the restoration of the lame man: “And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. But those things, which God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.” ib. iii. 18. And in the fourth chapter, it is recorded, that when they had been examined before the Jewish authorities in relation to this miracle, and were borne up by divine power on that occasion, and finally returned to their own company, and reported what had taken place—“They lift up their voice to God with one accord,” in adoration and praise. And in that united address to the throne of Grace, they say, “Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do, whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.”

The *coming* of our Lord Jesus Christ, with all that he did and suffered, is ascribed to infinite Love. “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John iii. 16.



“ Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us.” 1 John iii. 16. “ Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins.” 1 John iv. 10. “ Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering, and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet smelling savour.” Eph. v. 2.

He also testified: “ Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” John xv. 13. “ I lay down my life for the sheep”—“ therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.” John x. 15, 17, 18.

Thus the death of our Lord, was one of the greatest evidences of his Redeeming Love; it was an act, which we should remember with the deepest reverence and gratitude.

But there is still further evidence, that it was both designed, and necessary. When “ Jesus began to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders, and chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day,” that zealous disciple Peter, who could not see the necessity for these things, and whose feelings revolted at the idea of his sufferings and death, exclaimed: “ Be it far from thee Lord, this shall not be unto thee!” “ But he turned and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me satan: thou art an offence unto me, for

thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." Matt. xvi. 21, &c. On another occasion he said: "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come." John xvi. 7. This saying was incomprehensible to his disciples. For how could they suppose it was expedient for *them* that he should go away? And especially if they connected this information with that which had been given of the manner in which he should go, that he must suffer many things, and be killed—How could they feel an interest in his death, or even in his separation from them? He had power to control the elements—to heal diseases—raise the dead, cast out devils, and powerfully administer comfort and consolation. They had felt the sweet influences of his presence, seen his miracles, tasted of his love, and all their hopes were centred in him. Nor could a case occur to their minds, in which benefits had been ascribed to the death of any of the prophets. But notwithstanding all this, the language of the Divine Master was, "nevertheless I tell you the truth, it is expedient for you that I go away." Here then was occasion for the exercise of *faith*, rather than of *reason*. And again he said: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." This it appears he said, signifying what death he should die, and that through his death, the grace which brings salvation, and draws the soul to God, should be dispensed unto all men.

As the hour of his trial drew near, and while



suffering the agonies of it, he said : “ For this cause came I unto this hour.” John xii. 27. When the Jews were about to apprehend him, Peter attempted to prevent the accomplishment of those events which the prophets and the Divine Master had foretold, but he was commanded to desist, with this further evidence of the Divine will : “ Think-est thou that I cannot pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?” Matt. xxvi. 53, 54. “ The cup which *my Father hath given me*, shall I not drink it?” John xviii. 11.

It was not possible for the Jews to defeat the purposes of his coming, by putting him to death, before his ministry was accomplished. The evangelist bears a testimony to this effect, when he says : “ No man laid hands on him, *because his hour was not yet come.*” John vii. 30. also viii. 20. But when he was about to expire on the cross, he said : “ *It is finished.*”

And when he had risen from the dead, and appeared to two of his disciples, “ He said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart, to believe all that the prophets have spoken ! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory ? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them, in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself.” Luke xxiv. 25—27.

Again, when he afterwards showed himself to the eleven, “ He said unto them, these are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet

with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them: Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins, should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things." Luke xxiv. 44—48.

The apostle Paul uses the following language: "Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying, none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come; that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles." Acts xxvi. 22, 23. And when he reached Thessalonica, "where was a synagogue of the Jews, as his manner was, he went in, unto them, and three Sabbath days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures, opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen from the dead: and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ." Acts xvii. 2, 3.

It was very probably an argument with the Jews against the Christians—that Jesus had suffered—because the idea which had generally prevailed among them was—that Christ should possess extraordinary outward power and glory, and should



abide for ever—And therefore to preach Christ crucified, was to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness. Hence the apostle thus reasoned with them—thus witnessed to small and great—that Christ must needs have suffered, that it behoved him to suffer—and that this Jesus whom he preached, was Christ.

The Epistles abound with testimonies of the same kind: a few of these will be sufficient for the present. The apostle, in speaking of the objects of his coming, says: “That he, by the grace of God, should taste *death* for every man.” Heb. ii. 9.

“For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ *died* for the ungodly.” “But God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ *died* for us. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the *death* of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we should be saved by his life.” Rom. v. 6, 8, 10.

Here the apostle ascribes *salvation* to the *life* of Christ, but he represents our being placed in a capacity to receive salvation, as the effect of his *death*. In the last passage it is expressed in very clear terms. We cannot construe what is there said of his *death*, so as to be understood of his Spirit. He is not reconciled to us by doing violence to this Spirit. To crucify afresh the Son of God, and put him to open shame, must, and for ever will, separate between God and the soul. We therefore believe, as R. Barclay expresses himself, that the grace which brings salvation is

the purchase of him who tasted death for every man.

Our Lord himself conveys the same idea in that memorable discourse to his disciples before he suffered, in which he told them it was “expedient for them that he should go away, for if he went not away, the Comforter would not come.” John xvi. 7.

The apostle Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans, xiv. 9, says: “For to this end Christ both *died* and rose, and revived, that he might be the Lord both of the dead and the living.” And in 1 Cor. xv. 3: “For I delivered unto you first of all, that which I also received, how that Christ *died* for our sins, according to the Scriptures: and that he was buried, and that he arose again the third day, according to the Scriptures.”

In the above passage from the Romans, he places *died*, *rose*, and *revived*, in the same construction, and by applying the words, *to this end*, which indicate motive, he shows that all these were in the divine purposes.

If it should be supposed that Jesus Christ could not be a proper *example* to us, without being placed exactly in our situation:

I would remark, that this hypothesis will go further than its advocates would probably confess they intend. It would not only deny his divinity, in the proper sense of that word, but it would ascribe to him no more strength, knowledge, or grace, than we possess. It would suppose that he might have *sinned*, and become “a cast-away.”



But this is not all. It would lead to the position that he actually did sin—"for *we* have all sinned." And not only so, but that he must have realized, in his own person or experience, all the difficulties and trials that any human being has ever endured: in order to be an example to such. This too would carry him through all conditions in human life, and all practices which have prevailed amongst men!!

There is no man possessing any religious feeling or even the common exercise of reason, who would not revolt from such a train of conclusions. And yet they all inevitably follow from the admission of the first proposition. There is a sophism in the beginning: and the most enormous errors follow, as the natural, and unavoidable deductions from it.

He was completely our holy example, in performing the various duties required of man. He not only delivered the purest precepts, that were ever delivered to man, but he also exemplified them in his own conduct: and thus not only displayed their excellence, but proved their practicability. Never could be a pattern more perfect than he was—never an example more interesting and animating, than that which he set before us. The most eminent patriarchs and prophets, through human weakness, or by the power of temptation, at some period of their lives, had deviated from a proper line of conduct, or fallen into sin. And thus none had yielded a perfect obedience to that manifestation of the divine will, which had been given, even under the former dispensation. In

the language of the Apostle, all had sinned and come short of the glory of God. How important then, was his *example*, at the very time when, by his divine precepts, he revealed those high obligations, and that perfect morality which consist with true holiness! That perfect accordance between the divine will, and *all* that he did, was of great importance and encouragement to *us*. We see that such a conformity to the divine will, which in us, and as an example to us, is properly called obedience, is possible, through the aid of that Spirit which, in its fulness, he possessed. He taught us, not by precept alone, but by example, both to walk before men, and to approach the throne of grace. It was he that taught us to use that endearing language of filial love and obedience, Our Father who is in heaven. It was he who taught that perfect resignation, which breathes the simple, comprehensive language: "Not my will, but thine be done."

But in contemplating the example of our blessed Lord, and his condescension, in stooping to be found in the form of a servant, we ought not to forget the important truth, that in Him dwelt the fulness of the Godhead bodily—and that it is only *of* that fulness "have all we received." *We*, as creatures, or vessels of *limited capacities*, can receive only *a measure*, of that Spirit, which, in its fulness, was in him. That measure we may have in its *purity*, and according to our capacities, as rational beings and moral agents, it may be in dominion over all in us, and completely guide and govern us, in all



the little which we have to do—and in this sense we are to understand that admonition, “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” Matt. v. 48. And yet we are not to suppose that we are to rise to an equality with the Deity himself; and of consequence, that no human being, can ever be considered as capable of attaining an equality with the Lord Jesus Christ, “in whom dwelt the fulness of the Godhead bodily.”

But lest it might be supposed that some of the preceding arguments favor the doctrine of unconditional election and reprobation, I will make a few remarks to obviate such an objection.

I do not deny that the Almighty has fixed and determinate purposes. How else can we have any ideas of *covenants* and *promises*? It was such a purpose to provide the means of salvation for fallen man. Such a purpose is expressed in the 2d chapter of Romans. “Who will render to every man according to his deeds: To them, who, by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life. But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile. But glory, honour, and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: for there is no respect of persons with God.” Rom. ii. 6—11. We must conclude that it was the divine purpose, that

Christ should come into the world, and become the author of eternal salvation to them that believe. And seeing that he was to come into the world, that lay in wickedness, that he was to become the captain of our salvation, and lead us to victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil, it was seen meet, in infinite wisdom, that he should overcome all these. Accordingly we find he subdued the powers of darkness, operating both immediately and instrumentally.

It was intended that he should be tempted—such was the testimony of the apostle Paul, Heb. ii. 18: and such was the evidence of the Evangelist, where he relates, that Jesus was led of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted. But it could not be supposed that the devil performed an acceptable service, in presenting those temptations. He was in the full exercise of his demoniac character. Our Lord was pleased to meet that malignant spirit, which had produced the fall of man from his original purity—and to overcome it, in its full power and immediate operation. But this, though in itself complete, was a victory only in part. The malignant spirit had obtained admission into the world, even in the infancy of human society—man had been brought under its power, and become active in extending its influence. Our Lord was pleased to meet that same spirit, thus operating in its instruments, and permit them to exercise their power to its full extent—and rising above it all, to give demonstration of his Omnipotence, and his ability to save unto the uttermost, all those who



look to him for assistance. He did not make the devil what he was: as appears by Jude the 6th: "The angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." Neither did he make the Jews the devil's servants. They became such through temptation, and the apostle James, says i. 13. "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man." Their enmity therefore against Jesus Christ, could be no mitigation of their character or condemnation.

Moral evil not only existed in the world, but it had obtained dominion over man. This was the very cause why a Redeemer was necessary. Our Lord Jesus Christ, condescended to become that Redeemer—And in order to effect the necessary redemption, he came, and fully accomplished the divine will, producing no depravity, but obtaining a victory over it where it already existed.

We do not suppose that any individual, either among the Jews or Gentiles, was ordained from all eternity, to become an active agent in producing his sufferings. It was in the exercise of their own choice, that they became subject to that principle and influence which made them the children of the devil, and when they became such, "his works they would do." John viii. 41—44.

It will not be contended that if all men had been under the divine influence—been governed by the Divine will, or in other words, had been in the

image of God, Jesus Christ would have been crucified outwardly, any more than he would have been crucified inwardly in their hearts. But it is equally reasonable to believe, that if the divine image had not been lost, man would have been in no need of a Redeemer—for the very term implies a state of subjection and bondage, from which he was to be redeemed. Neither would there have been occasion for the dispensation of the law, for the law was not made for the righteous but the transgressor—Nor would there have been occasion for the outward appearance of Jesus Christ, as already suggested. For man being already in the divine image, would have needed no propitiation—no mediation nor redemption. If sin had not obtained an entrance into the world, with all its consequences, there would have been no occasion for him to come, “to put away sin, by the sacrifice of himself.”

To those, therefore, who say, that had not darkness and depravity been in the world, our Lord would not have suffered:

It may be replied, in the words of the apostle: “For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.” 1 John iii. 8.

We therefore maintain that there is no Calvinistic principle involved in this doctrine. The declaration to the house of Israel still holds true: “I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing, therefore choose life, that



thou and thy seed may live." Deut. xxx. 19. And in the exercise of that choice, we become servants of him to whom we yield ourselves servants to obey—whether of sin unto death, or of righteousness unto eternal life. And as our Lord said to the Jews, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do." And as he met their father, permitted him to put forth his power in temptation, and then overcame him—so he condescended to fall into *their* hands—permitted them to exercise their powers to their full extent, and then rose triumphant over it all. And these divine purposes and operations, no more gave a sanction to the character and conduct of the Jews, than they did to that malignant spirit by which the Jews were actuated.

For as this spirit was to be resisted by our Lord in its immediate operation; so he was also to overcome it, as it operated instrumentally in men, who had been brought completely under its government and control. And as he was not the author or cause of that spirit, and its immediate operation against himself, so neither was he the cause of its dominion over the Jews, nor of any of its genuine effects in their conduct.

It remains now to say something of the extent of the benefits of Christ's coming. These benefits we do not confine to the nation of the Jews, nor yet, to those who have become acquainted with the history of his life.

The promise made to Jacob at Bethel, is evidence to this point of doctrine: "In thee, and in thy

seed, shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Gen. xxviii. 14. Here the blessing is evidently extended to *all*. And in considering Christ the seed of Abraham or Jacob, we must have some special reference to his outward appearance. The prophets spoke of him in this manner, Isa. xlii. 1, "Behold my servant, whom I uphold, mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. 4. The isles shall wait for his law. 5. Thus saith God, the Lord, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: 6. I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles: 7. To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness, out of the prison house."

It is no abatement of the force of the argument to say, that the Light of Christ is here spoken of. I agree that it is, but his outward appearance is clearly spoken of at the same time; and as they are joined in the text, we have no right to separate them. In the 54th chapter, immediately after that extraordinary prophecy respecting the coming and sufferings of Christ, which has already been quoted, the prophet thus speaks of the blessings which it would bring to the Gentiles: "More are the children of the desolate, than of the married wife, saith



the Lord:" which was remarkably verified in the accession of the Gentiles to the true Church, beyond what took place among the Jews. The prophet proceeds: "Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thy habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes: For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited." These prophecies clearly relate to the advent of the Messiah, and the blessings connected with his coming.

The angel, in announcing to the shepherds, the birth of Christ, "said unto them, fear not: for, behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be *to all people*." Thus we see the birth of Christ, was good tidings of great joy; not confined to the Jews, but extended *to all people*. And the anthem of the heavenly host, was a clear indication of the effects to flow from this deeply interesting event—"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men." And as these effects are not confined to one small portion of the globe, so it follows that the benefits of his coming were commensurate with these.

It is true, he came, in a particular manner, to the Jews. His miracles were wrought, and his living example was set among them. The law pointed to his personal appearance, and ended when he offered up his life on the cross. But still the Gentiles were not excluded from the benefits he offered to the Jews. There was, in the legal

dispensation, a strong partition wall of separation between Jews and Gentiles; but he broke down that middle wall of partition. And as the Jews were called out of typical rites and carnal ordinances—so the Gentiles were called out of pagan darkness—and both were to unite in the light, and the liberty of the Gospel. When our Lord had risen from the dead; he gave his Apostles a mission, embracing the Gentiles no less than the Jews. The fruits of that mission gave evidence that the immediate effects of the introduction of the new dispensation, were confined to no nation or description of the human race.

Even the abrogation of the law itself had an effect on the Gentiles, because it removed a distinction which had previously existed, and placed them on a footing with the Jews.

Though Christ abrogated the law, we cannot suppose that this was the particular object of his coming. He was promised before the law was in existence, and the law was designed as a school-master, to lead to him. He did not come merely to remove the bondage of the law, but the bondage of corruption. It was not only to abolish the service of the temple, but to bring life and immortality to light, to be a light to the Gentiles, and bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness, out of the prison house.

The apostle, in his Epistle to the Romans, v. in speaking of the coming of Christ, takes the same enlarged views of the subject. “And not only so, but we also joy in God, through our Lord



Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement. Wherefore, as by one man, sin entered into the world, and death by sin: and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned—therefore, as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so, by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men to justification of life—that, as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign, through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.” “For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead—for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive,” 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22. In this passage there is relation to the outward appearance of Christ, his death and resurrection; for he cannot be called *man*, except in relation to his coming in the flesh. So the objects of that coming extended as far as the effects of sin had extended. Thus, as by one man, sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, so the benefits of Christ’s coming and what *he did* were to be as extensive: being the means of our restoration out of the fall, they reach wherever man needed a Saviour.

And, as he came to save the world, John xii. 47, he must be a Saviour to all nations, and in all ages. And he who takes in, at one view, the past, the present, and the future, could certainly make the remedy which he had provided for *all*, apply to *all*: to those who lived *before*, as well as to those who lived *after* its outward manifestation.

Sin was in the world before the outward coming of Christ, and, as he was the sacrifice for sin, it must have applied to all who needed it. Sin now operates where the means by which it was first introduced into the world were never heard of. And, by a parity of reasoning, the remedy must also be offered in such cases, though they never heard of the means by which that remedy was provided.

Immediately after the fall, when judgment came upon our first parents, the promise of the seed was made—and this became an object of faith: even that faith, the power and efficacy of which the apostle so beautifully describes. Then, too, commenced that dispensation of types and shadows which pointed to Christ, and continued to the time when he offered up his life on the cross. By this faith, it was that the elders obtained a good report. By this also Abel offered a more acceptable offering than Cain. The apostle proceeds to enumerate the patriarchs down to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as examples of the efficacy of faith: and then says, “These all died in faith; not having received the promises, but having *seen* them afar off, and were *persuaded* of them, and *embraced* them,” Heb. xi. 13.

Our Lord also testified, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad,” John viii. 56. Thus, while they had the promises of the Messiah to come—while they were exercised in types and shadows, pointing to those good things: though the things promised



themselves were afar off—yet, through *faith*, they were enabled, not only to see them at a distance, but to be *persuaded* of them, and to *embrace* them. Thus, in that living faith, they had “the substance of the things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen,” or capable of being seen, but through the medium of this faith itself.

It is not my intention to attempt, in any degree, to remove that vail with which Almighty God has covered those secret things which belong to himself. He has been pleased, in condescension, to reveal to us, that through our Lord Jesus Christ, the free gift came upon all men unto justification. And we have neither right nor occasion to inquire *why* or *how* it was done. But we are bound to believe that *it was done*; and that it came upon ALL; every age and part of the world participated in the benefits of that one offering, by which he hath for ever, and, as W. Penn observes, *in all times*, perfected those who are sanctified, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

And this is the testimony of our primitive Friends, and of the Society, down to the present day. R. Barclay, in the Thesis to the 5th and 6th propositions of his Apology, when speaking of the true light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world, says, “*Nor is it less universal than the seed of sin—being the purchase of his death, who tasted death for every man: for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.*”

The doctrine of that sanctification of the Spirit,

which we must experience *in* ourselves, in order to obtain salvation; has already been alluded to in the chapter on the Original and Present State of Man; and in that on the Universality of Grace; and will again be brought into view, in one relating to Sanctification and Justification. But, considering its importance, I am not willing to pass from the present subject, without repeating, that salvation, is an *actual*, and not an ideal work. We must *experience* it, if we attain to it. If we have not the Spirit of Christ, ruling and purifying our hearts, we are none of his. We are bound to commemorate his goodness—to remember, with humble gratitude, what he has done and suffered for us. But we should still bear in mind, that these benefits and intended blessings will avail us nothing, if we do not submit to the operation of his Spirit and power in our hearts. Where much is given, much will be required. And surely *much* has been done for us all. If the Lord Jesus Christ has offered up his life for us—if, in reviewing the agonizing sufferings and death of the immaculate Lamb, we are to consider them as the evidences of his redeeming love—and as designed to obtain eternal redemption for us—how humbling, how tendering must be the reflections! How strong must be our obligations to love and obey *him*, who first loved us, and gave himself a ransom for us! How great must be our condemnation, if we become insensible to these powerful motives to gratitude and love! “If a man love me,” said he, “he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will



come unto him, and make our abode with him," John xiv. 23. Here the first spring of action is the love of Christ, operating upon our hearts. Obedience flows from that love. This again draws more largely of the divine favour; and ends in an intimate union and communion with God—a sensible enjoyment of his divine presence.

It never was intended by the death of Christ, to purchase for us the privilege, (if privilege it can be called,) of living without God in the world. He did not come to perpetuate sin, and establish the dominion of darkness; but to finish transgression, make an end of sin, and bring in everlasting righteousness—that sin might no more have dominion over us—and to bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. Though Christ has died for us—though he has given us a measure of his grace—though he visits and revisits us with the offers of his love, and of salvation, yet it is possible for all these favours to pass from us, so that we may never realize any advantages from them in the end.

Let us therefore remember that we are bought with a price, and are not our own—that we may not henceforth live unto ourselves, but unto him who died for us, and rose again—that as he rose from the dead by the power of the Father, so we may walk in newness of life, by the aid and operation of his Spirit, revealed in our hearts.

I do not consider it proper to enter upon an inquiry into the divine nature; or how it subsisted in its different manifestations; or how the Divinity

was connected with human nature; or why this was necessary. The secrets of the divine counsels do not belong to us; and we have no occasion to enter into discussion respecting them. On the contrary, wherever they have been made the subjects of *curious and speculative* inquiry, the mind has been in danger of being led, by specious reasonings, into views and sentiments incompatible with those which have been presented to us through the medium of divine revelation: and thus the whole ground of infidelity lies open before those who enter into such inquiries.

On reviewing this portion of the doctrines of the gospel, we may remember, that no part of the Christian system has been so frequently assailed, or with such varied modes of attack, as this. Here it was that the Jews stumbled and fell. Here the wisdom of the world, from the Greeks down to the present day, has discovered (as it has supposed,) much foolishness. Here reason has exerted its powers, to penetrate into the secret counsels of the Almighty, and has boldly attempted to bring down, even the divine nature, to the measure of its own limited capacity.

No wisdom but that wisdom which is from above can comprehend the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. And as the Divine nature, and the Divine counsels are abundantly wrapped in deep mystery, the curious have been anxious to discover—the presumptuous have been bold to explain—and the sceptical have been ready to deny, those things which mere human faculties never could under-



stand. The means of redemption have opened a wide field of conjecture for speculative minds. But how inadequate must be the most exalted human powers, to comprehend the love of God, operating for the redemption of a fallen world ! How unable to devise the means ! how incapable of tracing them to the accomplished end !

It still remains to be the divine determination to “confound the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nought, the understanding of the prudent.” And yet he will, from time to time, reveal to the humble, attentive mind, however simple, all that is necessary for it to know.

It is instructive to remember, that when John saw, in the hand of him that sat on the throne, a book, written within and on the back side, sealed with seven seals—“there was no man found in heaven, nor on earth, worthy to loose the seals, or to *look* thereon.” Let us then be cautious, how we presume to look thereon, or make what lies beyond the seals, the subjects of speculative inquiry. It is the Lion of the tribe of Judah alone, that is worthy to open this Book, and reveal the deep mysteries it contains. And until he is pleased to do this, all human anxiety is unavailing. And when this great work is going on, it will be *progressive*, and in due *order* from the *first* to the *seventh*. And as it is carried on, how every thing is brought down, into greater and greater degrees of abasement, till nothing but God alone is exalted and there is silence in heaven.

But before this state is experienced, there is

another state or dispensation to be passed through—a state represented by the most striking metaphors—“There was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood, and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken by a mighty wind. And the heavens departed as a scroll, when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond man, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?” Where then will be all the idle notions of speculative minds? The very heavens—the imagined righteousness of these, must pass away as a scroll when it is rolled together.

Let us then seek rather to have our minds enlarged in the love of God in Christ Jesus, that we may adopt the language of the apostle, “we love him because he first loved us.” In the affusions of this love, which prompts the filial language of *Father*, we shall be enabled “to receive the kingdom of heaven as a little child.” How striking the comparison! In the little child there are no bold flights of fancy—no philosophical reasoning,



(falsely so called,) no feelings of its own independent capacities and powers—but all is dependence on the teaching of the parent—all is faith—unhesitating confidence in the counsel and instruction received. In this humble, dependent, teachable state of mind, with love predominating over all, we shall be prepared for the opening of the seals; and view with increasing gratitude, at every stage of this progressive work, the wonders of Redeeming love—to sing the new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and has redeemed us to God by thy blood,—and has made us unto God kings and priests:—and finally to participate in that heavenly silence, in which God is felt to reign over all, with that power and majesty, which the language of saints and angels cannot adequately convey.

## CHAP. V.

### OF SANCTIFICATION AND JUSTIFICATION.

I HAVE already shown, in preceding articles, that we believe Justification to consist of two parts, “or to have a twofold consideration.” It has also been fully stated that we believe that the first part consists in what Jesus Christ did for man, in removing the incapacities of the fallen state, and placing, in every human heart, that seed of grace, which is the first principle, and efficient cause of salvation. The second part consists in what He does for us, *in us*, and this forms the subject of the ensuing article.

As the inward operations of the Spirit of Truth are submitted to in the convictions for sin, and desire after redemption, which it produces in the heart, the work of Sanctification and Justification advances—for they go on together.

The apostle very clearly sets forth the successive advances of this great work. “But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” 1 Cor. vi. 11.

The first operations of Divine Grace on the



heart, are generally of the tendering kind. It is true that the mind may be powerfully broken in upon, and the just judgments of God for sin, may be awfully revealed, but this does not take place, unless there has been a slighting of the day of merciful visitation, and the offers of Redeeming Love. But even when the rebellious and back-sliding, are thus met with in judgments mixed with mercy—as there is a willingness wrought to submit to the purifying dispensation, the heart is brought into a state of great tenderness.

This state of Christian experience is beautifully illustrated by the baptism of water to repentance, and is the very thing typified by that baptism, as used by John, to whose ministration it peculiarly belonged. And this answers to the language of the apostle, who represents washing, as the first process in the great work of renovation.

Under this dispensation, the subject not only becomes washed, and cleansed from the more obvious defilements, such as (figuratively speaking) water can reach,—but as repentance is experienced and in the melting, soothing affusions of Divine Love, the soul becomes powerfully attached to its Redeemer. And thus it becomes prepared to bear a more purifying dispensation, which answers to the baptism of *fire*: wherein all those deep defilements, that were not reached by the former cleansing are removed—the dross, the tin, and even the reprobate silver are consumed, and *sanctification* takes place.

And not till we have passed through these

purifying dispensations, are we sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. Then it is that old things are done away, and all things become new. In this state the soul is united to God, in a holy fellowship and communion, and stands as *justified*, or accounted just: its former transgressions being forgiven, done away, and remembered no more.

The judgments of God are not according to the decisions of men, who sometimes justify, or account men just, when there is no real change effected, but a mere exemption from the consequences of guilt. But as sin produces corruption and defilement, these must be cleansed and removed, before the subject can be accepted or accounted as justified: and this cleansing from the defilements of sin is sanctification.

Various opinions have existed among the different denominations of Christians on the subject of justification. While some have imagined it to depend on *good works*, others rejected works altogether, and supposed it to depend on the *merit* and righteousness of Christ, imputed to us. And others again imagine our justification and acceptance to depend on an irrevocable decree, existing from all eternity.

The Society of Friends do not exactly coincide with any of these opinions.

As we stand in the fall, or unregenerate state, we possess no merit, or power of ourselves, by which we can obtain acceptance, or make reconciliation with God. Much less can we have any thing to



make atonement for sins committed. God requires nothing but our duty. Any thing more than duty could not be acceptable to him. This leaves nothing wherewith to balance the account, of duties omitted, or crimes committed. But, by the coming and offering of Christ, "the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." Here it is shown that this natural incapacity is removed—that this free gift is extended to all men, and that, if not obstructed by disobedience, it ultimately leads "to justification of life."

This grace and gift to us is the pure love of God, by which we are called and invited to come unto him, and by which we are drawn in love, and gratitude, and obedience to him.

This love of God, through Jesus Christ, is the very spirit of reconciliation, and the only possible medium by which we can become united to him. But, in its first extension to us, we are no further justified than to receive the capacity to salvation, and the offers of forgiveness of sins that are past, and to stand acquitted from them by the atonement of Christ, supplying what was lacking on our part, on condition of our obedience to the manifestations of his Spirit. As these manifestations are obeyed, and repentance, and the laver of regeneration passed through—with the various baptisms and purifying operations of divine grace in us, the work of sanctification is effected. And as we are sanctified, so we are justified. Nor does complete justification take place, in moral agents, any other way. We may indeed be sanctified in part, and

justified in part; for as this is not (generally) an instantaneous work, so there are many intermediate stages between the beginning and completion of this important change.

As we possess no power or capacity of our own, for any good thing, so we cannot pretend that our own right hand can save us. All the willings and runnings of *our* will avail nothing. “By grace we are saved, through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God.” But, though it is by this alone that we are saved—though we can claim nothing as *due* to us—but, on the contrary, are bound to acknowledge, after all, that we are unprofitable servants—we have done no more than was our duty to do, and this by the help of the Spirit of God, producing the will, and giving ability to do the deed; yet as this divine principle of light and life becomes the governing and predominating power in us, it brings forth works of righteousness, as well as a state of sanctification. Good works are the fruits of this divine principle, as said the apostle, “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.” And thus also, the same apostle, in another place, says, “By the grace of God, I am what I am.”

And as our beneficent Creator, in his inscrutable wisdom and goodness, has constituted us with the freedom of will, to choose the principle and motives by which we will be governed, (for though he produces in us the will, and gives ability to perform his own good pleasure, yet he grants us the privi-



lege to make that will our own,) as this is realized in us, and works of righteousness produced, as the fruit of the Spirit, we not only become sanctified and justified—but also, in some sense, objects of rewards. Not by virtue of what we have done, in our own wills, but in the divine will.

When we reflect, that not only the ability for every good word and work, but even the most secret inclination of heart to serve God, is the effect of his own divine influence on us—when we further bring to mind the disappointments, the miseries, and vexation of spirit, which are the genuine effects of sin, on the one hand, and the pure, substantial enjoyments of peace and animating hope, which are the portion of the righteous in this life—we may exclaim, in the language of the poet,

“Astonishing beyond astonishment!

Heaven the reward for heaven enjoyed below!”

To conclude, “let none be so bold as to mock God, supposing themselves justified and accepted in the sight of God, by virtue of Christ’s death and sufferings, while they remain unsanctified and unjustified in their own hearts, and polluted in their sins: lest their hope prove that of the hypocrite, which perisheth. Neither let any foolishly imagine, that they can, by their own works, or by the performance of any ceremonies, or traditions, or by the giving of gold or money, or by afflicting their bodies in will-worship, and voluntary humility, or foolishly striving to conform

their way to the outward letter of the law, flatter themselves that they *merit* before God, or draw a debt upon him, or that any man or men have power to make such kind of things effectual to their justification, lest they be found foolish boasters, and strangers to Christ—indeed. But blessed for ever are they that, having truly had a sense of their own *unworthiness* and sinfulness, and having seen all their own endeavours and performances fruitless and vain, and beheld their own emptiness, and the vanity of their hopes, faith, and confidence, while they remain inwardly pursued and condemned by God's holy witness in their hearts, and so having applied themselves thereto, and suffered his grace to work in them, are become changed and renewed in the spirit of their minds, past from death unto life, and know Jesus arisen in them, working both the will and the deed: and so having put on the Lord Jesus Christ, in effect, are clothed with him, and partake of his righteousness and nature. Such can draw near to the Lord with boldness, and know their acceptance, in and by him, in whom, and in as many as are found in him, the Father is well pleased," (*Barclay's Apology, Prop. 7.*)



## CHAP. VI.

### OF PERFECTION AND PERSEVERANCE.

It has been shown, in the preceding article, that as the grace of God, which brings salvation, is received, and its teachings obeyed, (for it is always accompanied with power,) as, under its blessed influence, instructing and strengthening us, we come to deny ungodliness and the world's lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, we become washed, sanctified, and justified. It remains to be considered how far this work of renovation may be advanced, or how far Christ may prevail in us, and we over our soul's enemies, through the operation of his power in us.

Does the Captain of our salvation lead us to complete victory? or must we remain, all our life-time, subject to bondage?

The weapons of the saints' warfare are mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strong-holds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity, every thought to the obedience of Christ.

The Society of Friends accordingly believe, that it is possible to obtain a complete victory over sin, in this life. If we believe, that there are some who are completely hardened, and given up to a reprobate mind: such as the apostle said *it is impossible to renew them again to repentance*, can we suppose that God is not able or willing to carry on his work of renovation and sanctification, in his devoted servants, as far as the grand enemy of mankind can carry on *his* work of darkness, in the children of disobedience?

The testimony of Scripture is very clear on this subject.

“Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof: neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God: for sin shall not have dominion over you.”

“Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” “Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.” “For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things, whereof ye are now ashamed: for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end



everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord," Rom. vi. 12, 13, 14, 16, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23.

"Awake to righteousness, and sin not," 1 Cor. xv. 34.

"Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world, and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith," 1 John v. 4.

"We shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. Whosoever committeth sin, transgresseth also the law, for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins: and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not." "Little children, let no man deceive you. He that committeth sin is of the devil, for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose, the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil. Whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God," 1 John iii. 2—8, 10.

The apostle admonishes the Hebrews, "let us go on to perfection." "Be perfect, be of good comfort," said he to the Corinthians. And can we suppose impossibilities are required of us? surely not. But he assumes this state as already attained—"Let us, therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded," Phil. iii. 15. Again he represents it as attainable—"That we may present

every man perfect in Christ Jesus," Col. i. 28. "Labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God," *ib.* iv. 12. "For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope *did*," Heb. vii. 19. "And this also we wish, even your perfection," 2 Cor. xiii. 9.

Thus, if we refer to Scripture, as authority in this case, as we do in all cases of the kind, the most ample and conclusive proofs will be found, in support of the belief, that it is possible for us to obtain a complete victory over sin, in this life.

If we reason from the nature of things, the conclusion will be the same. For who can suppose either that God determines that his most devoted servants should continue in sin through their whole lives, or that he is unable to redeem them from all evil?

What father or master would so dispose the government of his children or servants, that they should either not serve *him*, or if they did, that they should be continually destroying what they had done right—or be ever offering him insults and indignities, or serving his inveterate enemy even more than they served *him*? (*Vide Barclay's Apol.*) The idea is certainly preposterous, as applied to human affairs. And surely we must allow that *human* wisdom and decorum are not superior to the wisdom of God, displayed in the moral government of his rational creatures.

How beautiful is the similitude of the *vine*, as applied by our Lord, to the relation between him



and his followers ! “ I am the Vine, and ye are the branches.” And how forcible the injunction to *abide in him*, or they could not bear fruit ! Is it not essentially necessary that they *continue* in the Vine ? And, if they continue steadily in the vine, their sap and nourishment will all be derived from that source. Making then the application which our Lord himself made—if we abide in *him*, deriving our whole life, growth, and nourishment from him—whence should we draw those influences that result in sin ? It is only as we are separated from him, and attached to some other stock, that we draw that poisonous sap.

And thus it is, that many who have made considerable progress in sanctification, by unwatchfulness, have suffered themselves to be detached from Christ, the true Vine—and have fallen into sin—some irretrievably, and thus made shipwreck of faith and a good conscience, and become cast away. While others, by attention to the witness for God, obtain repentance, forgiveness, and restoration, through the riches of divine mercy : “ For God is able to graff them in again.”

But the question is not, whether *some do not sin ?* but *whether the dedicated servants of God are under the absolute necessity to sin ?* We believe they are not. There are a cloud of witnesses to prove that they are not. We are sensible of the frailties of human nature. We know that man, by his own strength, and in his own will, cannot obtain a victory over sin. Neither can he obtain a victory over one individual sin. But, as he is endued with

the power of God to salvation; he experiences the truth of the answer made to the apostle—"My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness," 2 Cor. xii. 9.

As our Redeemer is all-sufficient to deliver us from the very chains and powers of darkness, so, when introduced into the glorious liberty of the sons of God, he is certainly able to preserve us in that liberty.

But, though we believe in the possibility of perfection, so as to attain to true holiness and a complete victory over sin, yet we believe it is only experienced by man, "as he is born again, renewed in his mind—raised by Christ, knowing Christ alive, reigning and ruling in him, and guiding and leading him by his Spirit, and revealing in him the law of the Spirit of life: which not only manifests and reproves sin, but also gives power to come out of it." (*Barclay's Apol. p. 242, Prop. 8.*)

We also believe in the admonition of our Lord, both as to its extent, and its absolute necessity: "What I say unto you, I say unto all, *watch*," Mark xiii. 37. For it is only in this state of watchfulness that we are taught to expect preservation.

The possibility of falling from grace is clearly established by Scripture testimony. Both the *Old* and *New* Testament abound with passages which cannot be misunderstood, in relation to the necessity of perseverance.

The prophet Ezekiel is very clear on this point: "Neither shall the righteous be able to live for his



righteousness, in the day that he sinneth." Ezek. xxxiii. 12. "When I shall say to the righteous, that he shall surely live, if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousness shall not be remembered, but for his iniquity that he hath committed he shall die for it." ib. 13.

The apostle Peter admonishes the true believers to "give diligence to make their calling and election sure." And the apostle Paul himself, found it necessary to keep his body under, lest after he had preached to others, he himself should become a cast-away. He speaks also of some who had made shipwreck of faith and a good conscience, which they could not have done if they had never had them. He also gives us to understand that those who had been enlightened, and tasted of the heavenly gift, and were partakers of the Holy Ghost, and had tasted of the good Word of God and the powers of the world to come, might again fall away so far, that it would be impossible to renew them again to repentance. Heb. vi. 4, &c.

But as the necessity of perseverance will not be denied, unless it be on the grounds of unconditional election and reprobation, and as that doctrine has already been examined, I conceive it unnecessary to enlarge here. (*Vide Barclay's Apol. Prop. 8.*)

When, in the solemn acts of devotion, we bow before the throne, we feel an irresistible evidence of the riches of his goodness, and the plenitude of his power. We know that he is willing and able to save to the uttermost. And if we sin, we are

left without excuse. We can plead no necessity to sin. The witness for God, that was disregarded, and perhaps trampled under foot, arises in judgment against us, and convinces us that the fault is all our own. Were not the fault our own, how could we feel *repentance*?

If we admit that a life of holiness is not enjoined, it will destroy the weight of religious obligation, and the very life of devotion, and set aside the whole body of Divine precepts and commands.

If we suppose that God has not enabled us to obey his commands, it will be casting a grossly injurious imputation on the Divine Character.

We are bound to believe that we are called to holiness, and to “be followers of God, as dear children”—“to put off the old man, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts,” and, “be separated” from all those things “for which cometh the wrath of God, on the children of disobedience”—“to be renewed in the spirit of our minds,” and “put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness:” and “walking as children of light, to serve him in newness of life.”

And we are equally confident that impossibilities are not required of us. He never designed to bring us under continual condemnation, by our continual falling into sin, for want of ability to resist temptation: knowing that “he will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able to bear, but will, with the temptation, make way also for our escape.”



Those who properly maintain the watch and the warfare, can adopt the language of the apostle: "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us, for I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord," Rom. viii. 37—39.

## CHAP. VII.

### OF THE SCRIPTURES.

IN giving our belief of the Scriptures, we adopt the language of the apostles themselves; that they “are able to make wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus”—that they were “given by inspiration of God, and are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” 2 Tim. iii. 15—17. “For the prophecy came not in old time, by the will of man: but holy men of God, spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” 2 Pet. i. 21.

But though we give a full and unequivocal testimony to their divine origin, and the just estimation in which we hold them, yet we are not willing to fall into the error, of ascribing to them a character or an efficacy which belongs only to that Divine Source, from which they came. Thus we do not call them “the Word of God.” And our practice in this respect, has sometimes been misunderstood by other religious denominations. But I would ask the calm and patient reflection of such, that they



may clearly understand our views, before they pass censure upon us.

What idea, I would inquire, do they themselves intend to convey by the terms, "the Word of God?" If they mean, that the Divine Spirit dictated them; so do we. If they mean that God spoke through his servants, as recorded in the Scriptures; so do we. Wherein, then, it may be asked, do we differ? It is in this. The Scriptures themselves, appropriate the epithet in question, to Christ.

The Evangelist says: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word *was* God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him, was not any thing made, that was made." John i. 1—3. "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." *ib.* 14. "The Word of God is quick and powerful, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart; neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight." Heb. iv. 12, 13. "The worlds were framed by the Word of God." *ib.* xi. 3. And John, in the Revelations, speaking of him who is "called Faithful and True," whom "the armies in heaven followed," and who is "King of kings, and Lord of lords," says: "His name is called the Word of God." Rev. xix. 13.

We therefore do not feel ourselves at liberty to apply that name to the Scriptures, which in Scripture, is applied to him who created the worlds. It would lead to erroneous conclusions; and might I

not say, without giving offence, that erroneous opinions have been already drawn on the subject.

It has been supposed by some, that the Scriptures are the only rule of faith and practice—and, constructively, that without a knowledge of them, salvation is not possible.

Here we take the same ground that was taken in regard to the name; for this is attributing to the Scriptures, what *they* testify should be ascribed to Christ.

The great body of Christian professors, confess that the mysteries which the Scriptures contain, cannot be understood without the illuminating influence of the Holy Spirit. And surely none of these can suppose that the Scriptures are superior to that Spirit from which they were given forth, and by which they must still be unfolded to the human mind. For the inconsistency of such an opinion must be obvious.

We think also that salvation is not limited to the circulation of the Scriptures. This would be derogatory to the Divine Character, as well as to the doctrines of the Christian Religion.

If none can be saved, but those who have the Scriptures, it is possible for man to deprive his fellow of salvation, by the exercise of force; in putting it out of his power to obtain the means. And thus it would follow, that human power can not only kill the body, but cast the soul into an eternal separation from the Divine presence; directly contrary to the doctrine of our Lord.

The condition of slaves is intimately connected



with this view of the subject. Even in the midst of a highly professing people, they are deprived of the Scriptures, by being deprived of education sufficient to read them. And these restrictions, and privations, are imposed by law, in some parts of the world, in which vast numbers of them reside. And can a legislative body thus deprive millions of their fellow men, of the means of salvation? can such an opinion find an advocate?

But I am aware that I shall be told, that they can hear the preaching of the Gospel; and thus they can be saved.

But what if the preaching which they hear should not be the Gospel? Or will *any* preaching that is delivered, even by unqualified persons, answer as well as the Scriptures? The objection, in the sense in which it must be taken, is going from the point—it is taking new grounds; and such as cannot be sustained. It is giving up the Scriptures as the rule, and transferring it to the preachers: because these slaves cannot refer to the Scriptures, as a test of what they hear. It transfers all that has been attributed to the Scriptures, from those sacred writings, to men—and many of these, not even professing to speak under divine influence. Are *these* doctrines of the Gospel? Is this the excellence of the new Covenant Dispensation? Are we brought, at last, to this point, to maintain that we *are* obliged to teach every man his neighbour, &c. saying, know the Lord?

The condition of the poor must also be taken into consideration. Many of these are destitute of

the Scriptures. And cannot God save these, though they are objects of his peculiar regard?

Infants too, are all destitute of the Scriptures. And are they all lost on that account?

These, it may be said, are only destitute of the Scriptures, in consequence of that course of events, which is the result of the moral government of the Deity himself.

The same may be said of deaf and dumb persons. And we are brought to the same conclusion, in relation to those nations, who never had it in their power to come to a knowledge of these writings. And, consequently, if we are to suppose that infants are not lost, for the want of that knowledge, which it is impossible they should have, so likewise of deaf and dumb persons—and of all others who are under the same privations, from causes equally beyond their control.

But in contending that men *may* be saved without the knowledge of the Scriptures, we do not intend in any degree, to let down their excellence, or deny their divine authority, or the superior advantages that *we* possess, who have them. The reasoning of the apostle may very properly be brought to illustrate our views on this subject. After showing that the Gentiles were objects of divine regard, he came to a question, very similar to that now under consideration. “What advantage then hath the Jew?” His answer was very appropriate: “Much every way;” “chiefly because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.” Rom. iii. 1, 2. And the Scriptures *now* embrace not only what



they possessed—the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms, but the New Testament, in addition to these. So that the advantages we possess over the heathen part of the world, are abundantly superior to those which were possessed by the Jews. And we are bound to acknowledge, commemorate, and be humbly thankful for these advantages. And more than this, if we do not make a corresponding improvement, our condemnation will be in proportion.

To suppose, because salvation is possible to those who are deprived of the knowledge of the Scriptures, that they are not eminently useful to those who have them, or capable of being so, cannot be drawn from reason or analogy. Such an idea would have a direct tendency to cut off the sense of the blessings we enjoy, and deprive us of the feelings of gratitude to the Divine Source of those blessings.

I am aware that it is possible not to distinguish between that which is *indispensable* and that which is *useful*—and consequently not to ascribe to that which is not indispensable, its due weight and importance. These errors have been fallen into, in regard to the Scriptures. While some have supposed they were indispensable, others, in avoiding this extreme, have denied their utility altogether: supposing, that because the grace of God is *sufficient*, and has appeared to all men, it is producing unnecessary perplexity in the heathen part of the world, to introduce among them the views, principles, and precepts which are presented

to us in the Scriptures. The sentiment amounts to this—that as man may be saved by the operations in his own mind, taken in connexion with what “Christ has done for us without us,” it is unnecessary and perhaps improper to disturb him with any ideas but his own. Whoever entertains opinions like these is certainly bound, by his own principles, to observe a profound silence. Whatever may be the ignorance of men—whatever light and knowledge he may think has been bestowed upon him, mankind, according to his own doctrine, are not to be benefitted by *his* sentiments, or his labours for their instruction. If he does propagate his opinions, he gives a practical contradiction to the very sentiments he is endeavouring to establish.

A man, we know, may exist in a state of extreme privation. And yet no one would suppose there would be no advantage—no blessing, in any thing he could possess above that state of privation and mere existence. And thus in the case before us; though we contend that a man may be saved, who is deprived of all instrumental advantages, yet we are bound to acknowledge that these external means are favours, for which we should be deeply and reverently thankful to Almighty God, who has been pleased to bestow them upon us. And the Holy Scriptures stand pre-eminently high among these blessings, for which we should be thus thankful. “Bless the Lord, O my soul,” said the Psalmist, “and forget not all his benefits,” Ps. ciii. 2. And this remains to be the language of the pious mind.



Thus the Society, from the beginning, though they have been unwilling to apply a name to the Scriptures, which belongs to the Divinity—and though they have been unwilling to ascribe to them an office and an efficacy which belong to Christ, yet they have valued them above all other writings in the world. And in all cases, and at all times have been willing to bring their principles and practices to them, as to a certain test. And not only so, but the different Yearly Meetings, from their institution down to the present day, have made it a rule of the Society, and held it up, as a strong obligation on all its members—“Frequently to read the Holy Scriptures.” And inferior Meetings are required to inform superior Meetings, whether these advices are observed in the families within their limits or not.

The following extracts are taken from the advices issued by the Yearly Meeting held in London; annexing to each the date at which it was issued:

“Recommended, as an incumbent duty on Friends, to cause their children to be frequent in reading the holy Scriptures, and to observe to them the examples of such children as in Scripture are recorded to have early learned the fear of the Lord, and hearkened to his counsel.” 1709.

“It is also seriously advised, that no friends suffer romances, play-books, or other vain and idle pamphlets, in their houses or families, which tend to corrupt the minds of youth; but that they excite them to the reading of the holy Scriptures,

and religious books. Let the holy Scriptures be early taught our youth, diligently searched and seriously read by friends, with due regard to the Holy Spirit, from whence they came, and by which they are truly opened: for they contain excellent doctrines, rules, and precepts, divine and moral." 1720.

"And, dear friends, inasmuch as the holy Scriptures are the external means of conveying and preserving to us an account of the things most surely to be believed concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in the flesh, and the fulfilling of the prophecies relating thereto; we therefore recommend to all friends, especially elders in the church, and masters of families, that they would, both by example and advice, impress on the minds of the younger a reverent esteem of those sacred writings, and advise them to a frequent reading and meditating therein;—and that you would, at proper times and seasons, and when you find your minds rightly disposed thereunto, give the youth to understand, that the same good experience of the work of sanctification, through the operation of the Spirit of God, which the holy Scriptures plentifully bear testimony to, is to be witnessed by believers in all generations, as well as by those in the first ages of Christianity; in which case, some account of your own experience will be helpful to them. . And this we recommend as the most effectual means of begetting and establishing in their minds a firm belief of the Christian doctrine in general, as well as the



necessity of the aid and help of the operations of the Holy Spirit of God in the hearts of men, in particular, contained in that most excellent book, the Bible; and of preserving them from being defiled with the many pernicious notions and principles, contrary to such sound doctrine, which are at this time industriously dispersed in the nation, to the reproach of the Christian profession in general." 1728.

"That they accustom them to the frequent and diligent reading of the sacred writings, which through divine goodness are afforded to us, for our 'instruction in righteousness,' 2 Tim. iii. 16. and, 'that we, through patience, and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope,' Rom. xv. 4." 1769.

"We earnestly recommend to all, the frequent perusal of the Holy Scriptures, according to repeated exhortations." 1789.

"We believe there is an increased attention in friends in various parts, not only to promote in their families the frequent reading of the Holy Scriptures, but to make it the employment of a portion of time daily. We commend this practice, and we believe that if the heads of families are careful in cultivating the seed of truth in themselves, there will be so little danger of the custom becoming formal, that it will not unfrequently be the means of quickening the minds of those concerned in it: more especially if a subsequent pause be allowed; in order that the sacred truths which have been read may have time to make their due impression on the mind; or that

the mind may have time to rise in secret aspiration after a blessing." 1807.

"It has afforded us much satisfaction to believe, that the Christian practice of daily reading in families a portion of Holy Scripture, with a subsequent pause for retirement and reflection, is increasing amongst us. We conceive that it is both the duty and the interest of those who believe in the doctrines of the Gospel, and who possess the invaluable treasure of the sacred records, frequently to recur to them for instruction and consolation. We are desirous that this wholesome domestic regulation may be adopted every where. Heads of families, who have themselves experienced the benefit of religious instruction, will do well to consider whether, in this respect, they have not a duty to discharge to servants and others of their household. Parents, looking sincerely for help, to Him of whom these Scriptures testify, may not unfrequently, on such occasions, feel themselves enabled and engaged to open to the minds of their interesting charge, the great truths of Christian duty and Christian redemption.

In considering this subject, our younger friends have been brought to our remembrance with warm and tender solicitude. We hope that many of *you*, dear youth, are no strangers to this practice, and to some, we trust, it has already been blessed. Hesitate not, (we beseech all of this class,) to allot a portion of each day, to read and meditate upon the sacred volume in private: steadily direct



your minds to Him who alone can open and apply the Scriptures to our spiritual benefit." 1815.

Advices similar to the above have been given by the other Yearly Meetings: which are omitted, to avoid unnecessary repetitions.

R. Barclay, in his Apology, p. 86, says, "We do look upon them as the only fit outward judge of controversies among Christians: and that whatsoever doctrine is contrary unto their testimony may therefore justly be rejected as false. And, for our parts, we are very willing that all our doctrines and practices be tried by them, which we never refused, *nor ever shall*, in all controversies with our adversaries, as the judge and test. We shall also be very willing to admit it as a positive certain maxim, *that whatsoever any do, pretending to the Spirit, which is contrary to the Scriptures, be accounted and reckoned a delusion of the devil.* For, as we never lay claim to the Spirit's leadings, that we may cover ourselves in any thing that is evil; so we know, that as every evil contradicts the Scriptures, so it doth also the Spirit, in the first place, from which the Scriptures came, and whose motions can never contradict one another."

And this has been the acknowledged doctrine of the Society, down to the present day.

We therefore view with feelings of deep regret and disapprobation any attempts to bring the Scriptures into dis-esteem, because such attempts invariably tend to let down, or discredit the important truths recorded in them—and thus openly or insidiously to sap the foundation of the Christian religion.

By whatever arguments therefore these attempts may be made, whether to cast contempt on the style—or to call in question the probability of the events recorded in them—or the authority by which they were given—or the manner in which divine truths have been represented—or consider them superseded by the diffusion of saving light—in whatever way they may be attempted to be brought into discredit, or into disuse—we are assured that the cause of religion can never be promoted by such means. And yet it deserves to be remembered, that the purposes and instruments of evil, have often been overruled by a superior power. And thus it has resulted in the case before us. For all investigations of the authenticity and divine authority of the Scriptures, have resulted in the more firm establishment of that excellent character which we claim for them.

In point of style, the Scriptures contain some of the best models of language extant. The Psalms, the Prophets, and the Book of Job, afford specimens of sublimity, which the best critics acknowledge, have no equal in ancient or modern composition. They abound in figurative language of a beautiful and animating description. And what is not unworthy of remark, there is no writing in which the figures of speech better bear the test of criticism, than those of the Scriptures. Even the most celebrated modern writers, in the use of figurative language, often fall into improprieties. But the figures of the sacred writings, are pure, striking, and correct. While many parts of the



Old Testament are truly and eminently sublime, the greater part of the New Testament, particularly the writings of the Evangelists, are equally remarkable for beautiful simplicity. So far as they are biographical, there are no laboured commendations of individuals, but the dignity of the characters, forms a striking but pleasing contrast with the native simplicity of the language in which they are commemorated. And yet, in some of the Epistles, and in the Book of Revelations, the writers were raised to a remarkable grandeur in their style, by the majesty of the views unfolded to them.

Even those very *peculiarities* of language which have been made the objects of ridicule by the licentious, are *interesting* as the venerable reliques of ancient simplicity.

But the *style*, is among the least interesting of their excellencies. They carry us back to the very earliest ages of the world; and while they bring to view the manners of mankind, in the infancy of human society, they, at the same time, present to us, the most rational accounts of the Creation of the world, the Providence of God, and the mediums through which he has instructed mankind, at different periods, in their relations to him and to each other.

The History, from being general, soon becomes principally confined to one particular family and nation, which was chosen, for wise purposes, that through them, the knowledge of the true God might be preserved. His dealings with that nation, were

of a character, calculated to excite the deepest interest in us : and the existence of that people to the present day, scattered among all civilized nations on the earth, yet not assimilated with any, but still retaining their tenets and customs, and an ardent attachment to their native country, may be regarded as a standing miracle. And indeed we cannot consider it in any other point of view, since it was particularly foretold by prophecy, and the history of the world does not afford a similar example.

We cannot contemplate the dealings of God with the Jewish nation, without being impressed with a sense of his Wisdom, Goodness, and overruling Providence. The necessity for the various obligations of the *moral law*, in order to secure the happiness of society, must be obvious to every reflecting mind. The *ceremonial law* is a wonderful display of Divine Wisdom and condescension, in preparing the human mind for the introduction of the Gospel Dispensation. While the Israelites were faithful to their religious duties, a protecting power and Providence was so conspicuously displayed in their favour, as very forcibly to impress the minds, even of heathen nations, by which they were surrounded. And thus a convincing testimony was held up to the view of such nations, of the being, and the attributes of the one true God. And when, at any time, they departed from his law, even though it might be in adopting the manners and idolatrous practices of the neighbouring nations, and when these very nations became their scourge, this also was a testimony to the



Divine attributes: and tended to diffuse in the world, a knowledge of God, his laws, and his judgments. Thus, in their prosperity and their adversity—whether holding a high and commanding station among the nations of the earth—or scattered into foreign lands, and made to witness a humiliating reverse of condition, one great object was still in a progressive course of accomplishment—to preserve a knowledge of God—and prepare mankind, both Jews and Gentiles, for the introduction of the Gospel Dispensation. Nor can we say that the dispersion of the Jews, among other nations, was less conducive to this great object, than their highest state of prosperity and grandeur.

Although the Holy Scriptures have descended down to us, through a long series of ages, yet they are supported by stronger evidences of truth, than any other history whatever. Among these evidences, may be mentioned, the scattered remnant of the Jewish nation—their customs and traditions.

Many of the prophecies which the Scriptures contain, are such as no human calculation or foresight, could ever have conjectured: and their exact fulfilment is strong evidence of their Divine authority.

So remarkable has been the accomplishment of many of these, that some writers, to evade the force of this evidence in favour of revelation, have dogmatically asserted, that they were histories, written after the events had taken place: and not prophecies of events to come.

Such an objection falls with full force on the

objectors themselves. For while it is an ample confession to the fulfilment of the prophecy, a confession to which they are compelled by history—the charge of their being written after the events took place, stands as the unsupported assertion of avowed enemies.

Against this charge, the testimony of the Jewish nation, may be advanced in support of the prophecies in the Old Testament, and of a succession of Christian writers, in a regular series for many hundreds of years, in support of those in the New Testament—to both of which may be added many corroborating testimonies of prophane history, of the highest respectability. Unfounded assertions, under such circumstances, cannot be regarded in any other light, than as evidences of the truth of the very propositions, they were intended to overthrow.

That many of the prophecies were such as no human foresight or calculation ever could have predicted, will appear from a few that may be mentioned.

At the time the burden of Babylon was pronounced by the prophet Isaiah, chap. xiii. that metropolis was one of the most powerful, most magnificent, and impregnably fortified cities in the world.

Prideaux, in his *Connexion*, Vol. 1, p. 99, gives the following account of its fortifications, and cites Herodotus as his authority: “The walls were every way prodigious: for they were in thickness 87 feet, in height 350 feet, and in com-



pass 60 miles; that is, 15 miles on each side. The walls were surrounded on the outside with a vast ditch, filled with water, and lined with bricks on both sides." "The earth which was dug out of it, made the bricks wherewith the walls were built; and therefore from the vast height and breadth of the walls, may be inferred the greatness of the ditch." "On every side of this great square were 25 gates, that is, 100 in all, which were all made of solid brass:" and on the walls were 250 towers.

A branch of the river Euphrates ran through the middle of the city, and was embanked on each side, with a wall of the same thickness with that which surrounded the city. The magnificent works which it contained, were for ages the wonder of the world. Who then would have supposed that the time was approaching, when it would be the habitation of the beasts of the desert—that it should "never be inhabited, from generation to generation"—that neither the Arabian should pitch his tent, nor the shepherd make his fold there? That the wild beast of the desert should lie there—the wild beasts of the islands cry in their desert houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces? And yet the prophecy has been so completely fulfilled, that, as Bishop Watson observes, "the world at this day knows not where to find the spot on which it stood." And what is very remarkable, in its final desolation is, that the houses and walls were left standing. In this situation it was used for some time by the Parthian kings, as a park for

wild beasts—and afterwards became so infested by venomous reptiles, particularly the palaces, &c. that travellers did not dare to approach within half a mile; except during two months in the winter. (*Vide Prideaux's Connexion, Vol. 2, p. 588.*)

The prophecy against Egypt, as delivered by Ezekiel, is also of this description. Egypt, very soon after the human family was divided into nations, became distinguished for a knowledge of the arts, and for the acquisition of power. Many nations had felt the weight of her yoke, and she was still in the full tide of prosperity, when the prophet pronounced, “Egypt shall be the basest of the kingdoms: neither shall it exalt itself any more above the nations, for I will diminish them, and they shall no more rule over the nations,” Ezek. xxix. 15. This prophecy, though delivered between two and three thousand years ago, has been in a course of completion, from near that time to the present. For “as is the prophecy, so has been the event. Egypt was conquered by the Babylonians: and after the Babylonians, by the Persians; and after the Persians, it became subject to the Macedonians, and, after the Macedonians, to the Romans, and, after the Romans, to the Saracens, then to the Mamelucs, and is now a province of the Turkish Empire.”

The prophecies of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, concerning Zedekiah, may also be mentioned: as they are recorded in the 34th chapter of the former, and 12th of the latter. By the former it was told



that the king of Babylon should take the city, and burn it with fire. And that Zedekiah should not escape out of his hands. That he should speak with the King of Babylon, and should go to Babylon—"yet that he should not die by the sword"—"but should die in peace." Ezekiel prophesied that he "should not see Babylon, though he should die there." This darkness of expression, Josephus intimates, induced Zedekiah to give no credit to either of these prophecies. But the event realized them both. The city was taken—Zedekiah fell into the hands of his enemies. He was brought to Riblah, a city of Syria, where Nebuchadnezzar gave judgment upon him. His sons were slain in his presence, and then they put out his eyes, and carried him to Babylon, where he died. 2 Kings xxv. 6, 7. Josephus, *Antiq.* Book 10, c. 8.

Many others, equally striking, might be selected, but they would swell this work beyond the limits which I have proposed.

The prophecies, however, which related to the Messiah, being of a peculiar character, deserve to be brought into view.

The promise made to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, in nearly the same language, may very properly be considered among the prophecies relating to Jesus Christ. "In thee, and in thy seed, shall all the families of the earth be blessed." These expressions were repeated to all three of the patriarchs. And, in the diffusion of light and knowledge, from the nation of the Jews, and the

coming of the Messiah, through them, this promise or prophecy has been fulfilled. But a similar declaration cannot be made of any other nation on the earth. In the blessing pronounced by Jacob on his sons, the following expressions occur: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come, and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." Accordingly, through all the changes and revolutions, captivities and desolations that overtook that favoured yet rebellious people, the Jewish polity never was totally destroyed, nor the national sovereignty entirely overthrown till the Messiah came.

He was spoken of as a King, a Prophet, and a Priest, a Deliverer—the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father. And yet that he should be a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief—that he should be led as a lamb to the slaughter, and, as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was to be numbered with transgressors, yet he did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth. Though a Priest, yet he was not to come of that tribe to which the priesthood was confined. Bethlehem was to be the place of his nativity, yet he was to be called out of Egypt—of the house and lineage of David, yet the Son of a virgin. Though titles are here given that never were (in Scripture) applied to any other man, yet he is at the same time represented as brought to the greatest humiliation, and even to death. Of that death, some of the most minute



particulars are mentioned. His being “led from judgment”—being numbered with transgressors—his grave with the wicked—and with the rich in his death—“They should look on him whom they had *pierced*—not a bone of his should be broken, neither should he be suffered to see corruption [or his body to putrefy]—they parted his garments among them, and for his vesture did they cast lots.” All these are both the language of prophecy and the language of history. Nor did one of the prophecies relating to the Messiah fail of its accomplishment in Jesus Christ.

The celebrated British orator, Erskine, in his speech on the trial of Williams, remarked, “I consider the prophecy relative to the destruction of the Jewish nation, if there were nothing else to support Christianity, as absolutely irresistible.”

The various incidents connected with this prophecy and the fulfilment of it, are so interesting, and so intimately connected with each other, that it would be impossible to present the subject in its full force, without very far exceeding the limits to which I am confined. And yet it is too striking to be passed over altogether.

Jerusalem was built on two mountains, and was fortified on every side, with three walls of great strength, except on one side, which was deemed inaccessible, and there it was defended by only one wall. On these walls were one hundred and thirty-four towers—besides which, in different parts of the city, were towers and forts of extraordinary strength and magnificence: some of

which were said to be of such exquisite workmanship, as to have the appearance of being hewn out of a single block of marble.

The richness, grandeur, and beauty of the temple rendered it an object of admiration to the world. Its strength corresponded to its magnificence and splendour. It is described as being four furlongs in circuit, one hundred cubits high, and being built on a mountain; its foundations were three hundred cubits deep. In these foundations, were stones more than sixty feet long, and in the superstructure there were blocks of the whitest marble, sixty-eight feet long, seven feet thick, and nine broad. How astonishing then must it have been to the disciples of our Lord, to be told, that not one stone of this ponderous edifice should be left upon another, that should not be thrown down!

As our Lord was about entering the city, a few days before his crucifixion—"When he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying if thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side. And lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee: and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation," Luke xix. 41, &c.

After this, while in the temple, teaching the



people, the high priests and elders, Scribes, and Pharisees, &c. successively came unto him, with artful and insidious questions, that they might, if possible, "entangle him in his talk:" to whom, with his accustomed dignity and wisdom, he returned such answers as carried conviction to their hearts, and at once silenced and astonished them. Having, with the most exquisite keenness of reproof, exposed the hypocrisy and wickedness of the Scribes and Pharisees, he proceeded to denounce against Jerusalem the heavy vengeance that had, for ages, been accumulating in the vials of divine displeasure; expressly declaring, that it should be poured upon *that generation*: and adding that pathetic apostrophe to this devoted city, "O, Jerusalem, Jerusalem! thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate."

Soon after this, he went out of the temple, and, as he departed, his disciples drew his attention to the wonderful magnitude and splendour of the edifice: how it was "adorned with goodly stones and gifts." In reply he said, "Verily, I say unto you, there shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

The prophecy extended to the signs which should precede this awful event—all which was completely verified, in the wars, and earthquakes, and famines, and pestilence, and fearful signs and

wonders which marked the approaching overthrow of the city, the temple, and nation of the Jews. The calamities of that time fully verified his declarations, when he said, "there shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world, no, nor ever shall be," Matt. xxiv. 21.

The city was besieged by the Romans suddenly, and at the feast of the passover—when it was thronged with Jews from all quarters. They were divided into three factions among themselves, who involved the whole city in one continued scene of rapine, murder, and confusion. With the most demoniac fury they burned their stores of provisions—the dead were left unburied in their streets and houses—famine and pestilence were soon added to their calamities, and were not less destructive than the sword.

Josephus estimates the number of those who perished in the siege, at one million, one hundred thousand! To which may be added the immense numbers of those who perished in other places—by the sword of their enemies, by famine, by pestilence, and by one another's hands.

The streets and alleys were obstructed with dead, vast numbers were piled up under the walls—and the channels literally streamed with blood.

Titus, in a council of war, had determined to save the temple; but it was burnt, notwithstanding his utmost endeavours to save it. The scene at that moment, as described by the historian, is of a deeply affecting nature.

When the temple became completely enveloped



in flames, from the extent of the conflagration, it impressed the distant spectator with an idea, that the whole city was on fire. The tumult and disorder which ensued on this event, says Josephus, it is impossible to describe. The shouts of the Roman legions, the outcries of the Jews—and the lamentations of those who were pent up between the enemy and the flames mingled in awful confusion. Those on the hill, and those in the city, seemed mutually to return the groans of each other: while the lamentations from the city were re-echoed from the mountains, and even from beyond Jordan.

In the mean time, the flames which enveloped the temple were so violent and impetuous, that the lofty hill on which it stood appeared, even from its deep foundations, as one large fire. The blood of the vanquished flowed in proportion. The ground could not be seen for the dead bodies, over which the Romans trampled in pursuit of those who were yet alive—while the roar of the flames, the clashing of arms, the groans of the dying, and the shrieks of despair augmented the tremendous horrors of a scene, to which the pages of history can furnish no parallel.

Thus “the vial of divine wrath was poured out upon this devoted city, and Jerusalem, once a praise in all the earth, and the subject of a thousand prophecies, deprived of the staff of life, wrapped in flames, and bleeding on every side, sunk into utter ruin and desolation.”

Nor was the desolation confined to the city:

“The rich territory of Judea was converted into a desolate waste. Every where ruin and desolation presented themselves to the solitary traveller, and a melancholy and death-like silence reigned over the whole region.”

Titus having given orders for the city to be razed to its foundations, it was so effectually done by the soldiers, that they not only threw down the buildings, but even dug up their foundations. The temple, though constructed of such enormous stones, was so completely demolished, that it is said the Romans absolutely ploughed up its foundations with a ploughshare.

Such was the improbability of these events, when they were foretold by our Lord, that Titus himself, after he had taken the city, with its various fortifications, was astonished at his success, and exclaimed, “Had not God himself aided our operations, and driven the Jews from their fortresses, it would have been absolutely impossible to have taken them, for what could men or engines do against such towers as these?”

The testimony of the evangelists and apostles, to the life and doctrines of our blessed Lord, is of more weight than simply the testimony of so many eye-witnesses. That the writings of the New Testament are ascribed to their real authors; and that they have been held in the highest estimation, from the time they were written, through the ages which immediately followed—is proved by a regular series of writers, from those times down to a period not remote from our own.



But this is not the only circumstance to be noticed when speaking of the character of the writers of the New Testament. There is unquestionable evidence that the early Christians did, by adopting and publishing the doctrines of the Gospel, as contained in these writings, expose themselves to much persecution, and even to death itself. They knew, in the beginning, that this would be the case, for the crucifixion of their Lord, was of itself a sufficient evidence of what they were to encounter. So sensible were they of these things, that one of them declared: "If in this life only we have hope, we are of all men most miserable." "For I think," said he, "that God hath set forth us the apostles, last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, to angels and to men. Even unto this present hour, we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place: and labour, working with our own hands: being reviled we bless: being persecuted we suffer it, being defamed we entreat: we are made as the filth of the earth, and the offscouring of all things unto this day." 1 Cor. iv. 9, 11, 12, 13. Yet they declared they had "not followed cunningly devised fables, when they made known the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." With this evidence, and supported by an invisible power, they rose superior to all the afflictions they had to endure, for such was their language. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril,

or sword? As it is written, for thy sake we are killed all the day long, we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." Rom. viii. 35, to the end.

Now what, it may be asked, could induce men to speak as they spoke, and suffer what they endured? Nothing of a sordid nature: nothing but the most unshaken belief of the truth of what they published to the world, by preaching and by writing.

It is acknowledged on all hands, that no system of morality ever published to the world, can compare with that of the Gospel. Is it then even probable that men would become *impostors* to promulgate virtue—to promote the happiness of man, and at the sacrifice of ease, of liberty, and life? Such an event would indeed be a phenomenon, a mystery on which those the least disposed to scepticism might well doubt. It is truly one of the most improbable conjectures, that could be formed, and certainly, could add no credit to any cause, in support of which it might be advanced.

If the apostles and evangelists did believe in the relations of facts which they gave: their testimony cannot be considered of doubtful authority. They had ample opportunity to be thoroughly acquainted with those facts, and the situation in which they



were placed, rendered it (I would say) impossible that they should be mistaken.

The discrepancies which are discoverable in the writings of the evangelists, are no argument against the authenticity of those accounts. The seeming disagreement arises from the shortness of the respective narratives, together with our imperfect knowledge of the manners, and even modes of expression, which belonged to those times.

On the contrary that very discrepancy, allowing the disagreement in its utmost latitude, is an argument of the authenticity of those Scriptures. For it proves conclusively that there was, in compiling those histories, no *combination*, to impose a fraud on the world. And we cannot for a moment suppose that a fraud was intended to be committed, without being led, at once to the conclusion, that a combination would have been the very first step, to give that fraud *consistency* and plausibility.

These writings however carry with them the internal evidences of truth and honest simplicity. And we cannot attribute to them one single improper motive, one single falsehood, without resorting to hypotheses of the most improbable kind.

It may not be improper here, to make some remarks on the *authenticity* of the Scriptures, and to draw the necessary distinction between *genuineness* and *authenticity*. "A genuine book," says Bishop Watson, "is that which is written by the person whose name it bears, as the author of it." Dr. Johnson defines *authenticity* to be "genuineness,

authority." Authenticity therefore embraces not only genuineness, but also the *truth* of what is related, and the authority on which it rests. The word does not simply mean that what is written is true, and ascribed to its real author; for in this sense, it would be equally applicable to works of the most frivolous description. It has also, and in an especial manner, reference to the *authority*, as well as *truth*, of the book or writing to which it is applied.

When we consider the necessity there is, and has been, for some acknowledged authority, to which to bring the conflicting opinions of men—when we remember the extraordinary manifestations of Power, which attended the first promulgation of the Scriptures, and the miraculous manner in which they have been preserved, as well as the truth of the different portions of history, of prophecy, and of doctrine they contain, we must be sensible that Divine Interposition has not been so evidently displayed, in relation to any other writing whatever. And therefore, we must acknowledge their *authenticity* stands on more elevated ground than that of any other writing in the world.

The miracles recorded in them, rest on the strongest grounds that could exist in the nature of things. To deny that miracles *could* be performed, is not properly a *deistical*, but an *atheistical* sentiment. For he that believes in a God, who created, and still upholds the universe, by his Power and Providence—who originally established the laws



by which all nature is governed, must also admit that he can impede or suspend the operation of those laws, or turn the course of events which are going on under them. Thus it is evident, the possibility of miracles cannot be denied, without, at the same time, denying the Being or the Providence of God.

The *possibility* of miracles being admitted, and the evidence of their having taken place, being the strongest that could possibly be produced, it devolves on the infidel to admit their truth, or produce counter evidence of superior weight, which it is impossible he should do.

Thus the Scriptures, as a historical or external evidence of revealed religion, have stood, and will stand, all the combined forces of infidelity. They have stood for ages—believed and vindicated by the greatest and best of men.

The young and inexperienced may rest assured, that it is more by ridicule, profane jests, and unfounded assertions, than by reason or evidence, that the infidel endeavours to invalidate or discredit the truths of the Gospel.

But over and above all this, the Christian system, as represented in the Scriptures of Truth, carries with it the evidence of its divine origin. The excellence of its moral precepts, the pure, sublime, and rational devotion it embraces, and the clear views it gives of the relation between the creatures and the Creator, may be said to be without a parallel in the world, and are every way worthy of its

**Divine Author.** But the best and most conclusive evidence in its favour, is to be found in the experience of those, who come under the blessed influence of those principles, to which the Scriptures bear testimony.



## CHAP. VIII.

### OF IMMEDIATE REVELATION, AND THE INFLUENCES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

MAN, merely by his natural faculties, never could have acquired a knowledge of God, or of the means of obtaining his approbation. And consequently there was a necessity for a revelation both of his will and his attributes. This revelation was afforded in the very beginning of time, and became more and more clear, till the full introduction of that dispensation, which is spoken of as marking "the last days;" and consequently in which there is to be no change.

It is unnecessary to enumerate particular examples of Immediate Revelation, in the Patriarchal ages, and during the legal Dispensation, or to show, that on the introduction of the Gospel Dispensation, divine revelation was more remarkably afforded than under the law. For all the various denominations, professing the Christian religion, will readily accede to this position. It will also be granted, I apprehend, that the influence which regulated the lives of the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, was of the same Spirit which opened to their minds, a knowledge of future events.

I take it therefore for granted, that immediate revelation, and the perceptible influences of the Holy Spirit, were enjoyed from the earliest periods of human society, to the introduction of the Gospel Dispensation; and that at *this* important era, it was more eminently experienced than at any previous time. The first inquiry then will be whether this favour is *continued* to the Church or not?

The Society of Friends believe that it is; and they think they are supported in this belief by the testimony of Scripture, as well as by individual experience.

In order, therefore, to decide whether *immediate revelation* was only a *circumstance* which attended the introduction of the gospel dispensation, or was really an essential part of that dispensation itself, we shall examine, first, a few of the prophecies which related to it; and then, some of the testimonies which are to be found of their fulfilment. Isaiah, who has been called *the evangelical prophet*, from his clear prophecies relating to the Messiah, and the nature of his kingdom, says, "For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring," xliv. 3. In speaking of the coming and sufferings of Christ, he says, "So shall he sprinkle many nations: the kings shall shut their mouths at him; for that which had not been told them shall they see, and that which they had not heard shall they consider," *ib.* lii. 15. And, after that clear



prediction of the sufferings and death of Christ, and the accession of the Gentiles which should follow, he says, "And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children," *ib.* liv. 13. And, in connexion with the same prophecy, he says, "Incline your ear, and come unto me, hear, and your soul shall live: and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David. Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people," *ib.* lv. 3, 4. "For thus saith the high and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones," *ib.* lvii. 15. "As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; my Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever," *ib.* lix. 21. "Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be thine *everlasting light*, and thy God thy glory," *ib.* lx. 19, 20. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt,"—"But

this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord, for they shall all know me, from the least of them, unto the greatest of them," Jer. xxxi. 31—34. This is called an everlasting covenant, *ib.* xxxii. 40. Ezek. xvi. 60. and xxxvii. 26. Heb. xiii. 20.

The prophet Ezekiel, also, in speaking of the blessings of Christ's kingdom, says, "A new heart also will I give you; and a new Spirit will I put within you:" "And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them," Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27.

"And it shall come to pass afterwards, [or, as the apostle Peter expressed it '*in the last days*,'] that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the hand-maids, in those days, will I pour out my Spirit," Joel. ii. 28, 29.

If these prophecies apply to the gospel dispensation, which I apprehend will not be called in question, they certainly apply to this dispensation as its permanent characteristics, and not as mere *circumstances* attending its introduction.



The testimony of our Lord himself, and of the apostles and evangelists, very fully corroborates and confirms the prophecies that went before, and still maintains the same doctrine, of the permanent nature of this trait in the character of the new dispensation, and of the necessity that it should be so.

Both the prophets and apostles represented the legal dispensation inferior to that of the gospel, in divers respects, and, in a particular manner, in the greater effusion of the Holy Spirit, and consequently a more eminent degree of immediate revelation. For the old covenant was to give way to one "more excellent, and established upon better promises," Heb. viii. 6. in which the access to God should be more easy, the revelation of his will be *immediate*, and this glorious privilege be placed within the reach of "*all*," "*from the least to the greatest*."

When our Lord had risen from the dead, and was giving his disciples that general commission for publishing his doctrines, he said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" — "and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world," Matt. xxviii. 18, 20. These declarations of our Lord were not confined, in their application, to those who were then present: but we may adopt the language of the apostle, that "whatsoever was written aforetime, was written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope," Rom. xv. 4. And therefore, as firmly as we believe in

the *power* of our Lord and Saviour, so firmly we may be assured, on the same authority, of his presence with his servants through all ages.

Previous to his crucifixion, and in order to prepare them for that event, and for a clear understanding of the nature of the dispensation which he introduced, he impressed on their minds, in a remarkable manner, this very doctrine which we hold, of the Holy Spirit: its sensible influences on the mind, and its *revealing* operations. “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.” Here is clearly set forth the *permanence* of this favour to the true believers. It was not to be a transient thing, afforded for a limited period—but to *abide with his disciples for ever*. He proceeds, “Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be *in* you,” John xiv. 16, 17. And, in the 25th and 26th verses of the same chapter, he adds, “These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” And again, in the next chapter, he says, “As the branch cannot bear fruit, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much



fruit; for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered," *v.* 4, 6. That the Holy Spirit was received by the primitive believers, according to these promises, will not be called in question, by any denomination of Christians. Nor was it conferred in only a few cases, or at a particular period. It fell on Cornelius and his household. It was received by the converts of Samaria, Acts viii. 15. The same favour was enjoyed by the churches throughout Judea, Galatia, and Samaria, *ib.* ix. 31. Thus also at Antioch, and the region round about, "the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost," *ib.* xiii. 52.

We are not, however, without examples of a contrary nature, which also deserve to be noticed. The eloquent Apollos, in his first visit to Ephesus, was instructed only in John's baptism; and though he was fervent in spirit, yet he did not fully preach the doctrines of the gospel, so that Aquila and Priscilla found it necessary to instruct him more perfectly. And that the most important defect in his doctrine related to immediate, divine influence, appears from the next chapter. For it is recorded there, that Paul, having passed through the upper coasts, came to Ephesus, (where Apollos had just been preaching, before he was more perfectly instructed,) and found certain disciples, of whom he inquired if they had received the Holy Ghost since they believed? But they had not so much as heard whether there was one or not. But, during his stay, and religious exercises with them,

the Holy Spirit was communicated to them, and it is very evident that they were not fully introduced into the church, until they had received it, Acts xviii. and xix. Though Simon Magus had received the tenets of the Christian religion, and been so far initiated into the society of the primitive believers, as to be baptized in water, yet, not having received the Holy Spirit, it was found that he had neither part nor lot in the matter, Acts viii. 21.

The doctrines of the New Testament confirm these historical evidences, in establishing the influences of the Holy Spirit, as a permanent character of the gospel dispensation.

But, lest it might be objected that, if miracles and the gift of tongues have ceased, the gift of the Holy Spirit has ceased also: a few remarks may be made to obviate such an objection.

The apostle enumerates various operations of the same Spirit. "For to one is given, by the Spirit, the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge, by the same Spirit; to another faith, by the same Spirit; to another the gift of healing, by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: but all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will," 1 Cor. xii. 8—11. From the whole tenor of this chapter, as well as from the nature of things, it is evident, that individuals might possess some of



these gifts without possessing all. For says the apostle, "Are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues?" v. 29, 30. Therefore, the absence of any of these gifts cannot be considered an evidence of the absence of that Spirit, from which they all proceeded. It should further be observed, that "faith," "the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge," and "teaching," are all ascribed to the same Spirit that enabled them to work miracles. Is faith now ceased in the church? is there no longer a word of wisdom, of knowledge, or of true teaching, to be found among the followers of Jesus Christ? And, if these have not ceased, then the Holy Spirit has not ceased to be conferred, for the apostle attributes them to the *same* Spirit.

"The love of God," said the apostle, "is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given us," Rom. v. 5. If the love of God was shed abroad in their hearts, by the Holy Spirit, by what means is it to be shed abroad in our hearts? or are Christians now to be totally destitute of that love?

That the in-dwelling of this Spirit, in man, is a permanent doctrine of the gospel, is further manifested by the following passages: "For to be carnally-minded is death; but to be spiritually-minded is life and peace." "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the *Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.* And, if

Christ be in you, the body is dead, because of sin; but the Spirit is life, because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.” “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God,” Rom. viii. 6, &c. “Christ in you, the hope of glory,” 1 Cor. i. 27. “For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of a man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things which are freely given to us of God,” *ib.* ii. 12. “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” *ib.* iii. 16. “No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost,” *ib.* xii. 3. “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned; but he that is spiritual judgeth all things,” *ib.* xiv. 15. In the second Epistle to the Corinthians, iii. 8, he calls the gospel dispensation, “the ministration of the Spirit.” “Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty,” 2 Cor. iii. 17. “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ,” *ib.* iv. 6. “For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in



them, and walk *in* them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people," *ib.* vi. 16. "Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" *ib.* xiii. 5. "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit, through faith," Gal. iii. 14. "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father," *ib.* iv. 6. "In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God, through the Spirit," Eph. ii. 22. "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might, *by his Spirit*, in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith," *ib.* iii. 14, &c. "There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling: one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and *in you all*," *ib.* iv. 4, &c. "But all things that are reproved are made manifest by the light; for whatsoever doth make manifest is light," *ib.* v. 13. "Christ in you, the hope of glory," Col. i. 27. "He, therefore, that despiseth, despiseth not man but God, who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit," 1 Thess. iv. 8. "Whereof the Holy Ghost also is witness to us; for after that he had said before, this is the covenant that I will make with them, after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I

write them," Heb. x. 15, 16. "If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit," 1 John iv. 12, 13. "And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us," *ib.* iii. 24. "And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth," *ib.* v. 6.

I might add the testimony of writers eminent for their piety, in a regular series, from the days of the apostles down to the present time. A few however will be sufficient.

Justin Martyr, who lived about the year 123, says, "God hath built to himself a natural temple in the consciences of men, as the place wherein he would be worshipped: and it is there men ought to look for his appearance, and reverence or worship him."

Clemens of Alexandria, who lived about the year 190, bears testimony to the continuance of "divine inspiration." "There is a difference," says he, "betwixt that which any one saith of the Truth, and that which the Truth itself, interpreting itself, saith."

And Tertullian, who was cotemporary with Clemens, acknowledges "the holy guidance of the universal light in the conscience."

Hierom says: "The law is Spiritual, and we have need of a revelation to understand it."

Origen, who lived in the beginning of the third century, speaks of "An immutable Law; which,



with the knowledge of good and evil, is engraven upon the heart, and grafted into the soul of man."

Gregory the great, on the words (He shall teach you all things,) says: "Unless the same Spirit sit upon the heart of the hearer, in vain is the discourse of the doctor," (or teacher.) "For unless he that teacheth be *within*, the tongue of the doctor that is without, laboureth in vain."

Lactantius, in the beginning of the fourth century, (besides many other remarks of the same kind,) said, that "as men receive (Christ) into their hearts, he buildeth a divine and immortal temple *in* them."

Athanasius, a few years after the last writer, says to the Gentiles: "The way whereby to attain to the knowledge of God, is *within* us. Which is proved from Moses; who saith, the word of God is within thy heart; and from this saying of Christ, the faith and kingdom of God is within you. If then the kingdom of God be within us, just so are we able to understand the word, or voice of the Father."

Chrysostom, in the latter part of the fourth century, says: "Wherefore let none blame the light they are not saved, but their own rebellion, who refuse to be saved by it." And this he calls, "A Teacher or Instructor, dwelling in man's nature."

Augustin, who was nearly or quite cotemporary with Chrysostom, says: "It is the inward Master that teacheth: it is Christ that teacheth; where this *Inspiration* and *Uction* is wanted, it is in vain

that words from without are beaten in." "For he that created us, and redeemed us, and called us by faith, and dwelleth *in* us by his Spirit, unless he speaketh unto you inwardly, it is needless for us to cry out." And in his discourse on John, he remarks: "God is properly King of minds or souls; because when he is received in, he governeth by his Divine Power and Spirit in the heart; therefore his kingdom is not after the manner of this world, but *within*."

Luther, in his Book to the nobility of Germany, says: "This is certain, that no man can make himself a doctor of the Holy Scriptures; but the Holy Spirit alone." And again, in the Magnificat he says: "No man can rightly understand God, or the word of God, unless he *immediately receive it from the Holy Spirit*; neither can any receive it from the Holy Spirit, except he find it by experience in himself; and in this experience the Holy Ghost teaches, as in his proper school: out of which school nothing is taught but mere talk."

Melancthon, in his Annotations upon John 6th, expresses the following sentiment: "Who hear only an outward voice, hear the creature; but God is a Spirit, and is neither discerned, nor known, nor heard but by the Spirit; and therefore to hear the voice of God, to see God, is to know and hear the Spirit." "By the Spirit alone God is known and perceived."

The writings of Thomas á Kempis, abound with sentiments of the kind. "He is that divine principle which speaketh in our hearts; and without



which there can be neither just apprehension nor rectitude of judgment." Book 1, c. 3, § 2. "The more a man is devoted to internal exercises and advanced in singleness and simplicity of heart, the more sublime and diffusive will be his knowledge: which he does not acquire by labour or study, but receives from divine illumination." *ib.* § 4. "The kingdom of God is within you, saith our blessed Redeemer. Abandon therefore the cares and pleasures of this wicked world, and turn to the Lord with all thy heart, and thy soul shall find rest. If thou withdrawest thy attention from outward things, and keepest it fixed upon what passeth within thee, thou wilt soon perceive the 'coming of the kingdom of God;' for the kingdom of God is that peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, which cannot be received by carnal and worldly men." Book 2, c. 1, § 1. "I will hear what the Lord my God will say *within me*." Book 3. c. 1, Discip. 1.

Thus we have seen, from a copious selection of Scripture evidences, that Immediate, Divine Revelation, is a permanent part of the Christian dispensation, and this doctrine is confirmed by the Fathers, the Reformers, and by pious individuals of various denominations, in after ages.

And as it was afforded to the Patriarchs, Prophets, and Apostles, and witnessed to by the Fathers, and by men eminent for piety, down to the present day, so it will be an illustration of the doctrines of the apostles, to present some testimonies from those, who, in different ages, were destitute of the Scriptures. It will be a collateral

evidence, that through all ages there has been a necessity for Immediate Revelation, and the influences of the Holy Spirit: and that these have been afforded, agreeably to the testimony of the apostle Peter, when he declared: "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons;" and of Paul, when speaking of the Gentiles, he bore testimony, that "God left not himself without witness" among them; and further proved that though they were destitute of the outward law, they nevertheless had the works of the law written in their hearts.

Pythagoras calls this divine principle, the "Great Light and Salt of ages." Anaxagoras called it, "The Divine mind." Socrates called it, "A good Spirit." Timeus styled it, an "Unbegotten Principle, and Author of all Light." Hieron, Pythagoras, Epictetus, and Seneca, say it is, "God in man, or God within." Plato calls it, the "Eternal, Ineffable, and Perfect Principle of Truth: the Light and Spirit of God." Plotin calls it, "The Root of the soul; the Divine Principle in man." Philo, "The Divine Power—The Infallible, Immortal law, in the minds of men." And Plutarch denominates it, "The Law and Living Rule of the mind, The Interior Guide of the Soul, and Everlasting Foundation of Virtue."

Of the opération of this Divine Principle in the mind, Plato gives this striking testimony: "The Light and Spirit of God are as wings to the soul, or as that which raises up the soul into a sensible communion with God, above the world, which the mind of man is prone to slug or bemire itself



withal." Cleanthes, a stoic philosopher, considered that men should be governed "by that Divine, Infinite, and Eternal Nature which is God, universally diffused or sown through the whole race of man, as the most sure and infallible Guide and Rule." "To live," said he, "according to this knowledge and direction, is strictly to live according to virtue; not doing any thing that is forbidden. The virtue and happiness of man depend upon the close correspondence of his mind with the Divine Will of Him who governeth the universe,"—"The knowledge of God, is imprinted on the minds of men."

The testimony of Plutarch deserves to be transmitted to posterity. "It is a law, not written in tables or books, but dwelling in the mind always, as a living Rule, which never permits the soul to be destitute of an *interior* Guide." "To debase this ancient faith of mankind, and natural belief, which is planted in all reasonable souls, is to overthrow the strong and everlasting foundation of virtue."

And Seneca bore this noble testimony, (among many others,) to this principle: "That virtue has sent her light before into the *minds of all*; for even they that *follow her not, see her*."

If not only the Patriarchs, Prophets and Apostles, were divinely inspired, but even those denominated heathen, were sensible of a Divine Principle in man, illuminating their understandings, and "raising the soul up into a sensible communion with God," how can we suppose that *that*

dispensation, which was to be marked by the pouring out of the Divine Spirit, should be destitute of this very influence to which even the pious heathen bore such noble testimony!

By the *pouring out of the Spirit*, mentioned in the prophecy which described the Gospel Dispensation, we must understand a more copious affusion of the Holy Spirit, than had been communicated before.

In that interesting conversation of our Lord with his disciples, before he suffered, and which has already been quoted, he was pleased to show the near relation, and intimate union which should subsist between himself and his true followers. And that this near and intimate union, in a spiritual relation, would not be destroyed by his outward presence being taken from them, but rather increased.

If the Holy Ghost is to abide with the true believers for ever—to *teach* them—bring to remembrance the precepts of Christ—and show them things to come—is it possible that this can be without immediate revelation? If the near relation in which we stand to Christ, is represented by the Vine and branches—if we are to derive our whole life and activity from him, can it be without our drawing divine intelligence from him, or experiencing his qualifying, renovating influence?

And why should it be thought more extraordinary for *him* to hold communion with *us*, than for *us* to hold communion with *him*? Pursuing the simile of the vine, as used by our Lord, the branches



may return a portion of sap to the vine, but in no case, without first receiving it from the vine. Thus also in our addresses to God, whether in supplication or in humble acknowledgment, the language must be the language of his own Divine Spirit in our hearts; for “we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us;” Rom. viii. 26—enabling us to make “intercession” “according to the will of God.” v. 27. And this, in some sort, may be compared to the return of the sap, from the branches to the vine. But *his communion with us*, may, on the other hand, be compared to the flow of the sap from the vine to the branches; for as it is the more copious, and the *first* movement of life, so, it is that on which all their life, growth, fruit, and circulation of living virtue, depend. Our Father who is in heaven, knows what we stand in need of *before* we ask him; Matt. vi. 8.—and therefore has no need that we should tell him our wants—but we do not know, either what will be acceptable to him, or beneficial to ourselves, without intelligence and instruction from him. Thus, in a qualified sense, even our prayers are not necessary, as spreading our wants before him, but as impressing them on ourselves, and directing our hearts to Him who has made them known to us, and is willing to relieve us.

Under the old covenant dispensation, the highest degree of Immediate Revelation was to the prophets. But the new covenant was described as eminently superior to the *old*, in the superior affu-

sion of the spirit of prophecy. "I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh;" Joel ii. 28.—and sons and daughters, servants and handmaids, should prophesy.

If Immediate Revelation, and the Influence of the Holy Spirit have ceased, then is the Gospel dispensation inferior to that of the Law. They not only had the *written* law, but they also had the opportunity of inquiring at the oracle, on particular occasions, which the general Law and Testimony could not reach: and thus a knowledge of the divine will could be obtained. In addition to this, prophets were enabled and commissioned to speak in the name of the Most High. But if Immediate Revelation has ceased, then we have only a written Law and testimony—we have not access to the oracle—no priests or prophets can inquire of the Lord for us. But then the promises cannot be fulfilled—The Spirit cannot be poured out upon all—Sons and daughters cannot be qualified to prophesy—The Comforter cannot have come—and the followers of Christ are not similar to the branches of the vine. But these are consequences which we dare not admit, and we must admit them, unless we admit the continuance of Divine Revelation.

And as we advance from a state of nature to a state of Grace, which is but an assimilation to the Divine Nature, the Revelation becomes more clear, and the influences of the Holy Spirit, more constant and more predominating.

As the gospel dispensation is more exalted, more spiritual than the law, so the divine, immediate



revelations and influences are more clear and permanent under the gospel, than under the former dispensations. Instead of presenting ourselves at the temple at Jerusalem, with sacrifices and burnt offerings, and inquiring through the medium of a priest, of the tribe of Levi, we may ourselves become temples of the living God—witness acceptable offerings prepared on the altar of our hearts—Jesus Christ himself being our high-priest, by whom we have access to God, and receive the intelligence of his will.

Another foundation can no man lay than is laid. The relation between God and his devoted children remains the same that it was, when the church appeared as a morning without clouds.

And as it was then, so it is now; no man can know the Father, but by the revelation of the Son, nor can any come unto the Father but by him. Well, therefore, might the apostle say, “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.”

Even those professors who deny immediate revelation to be continued in the church, still directly or indirectly acknowledge the influences of the Holy Spirit. And yet, if these influences relate to duties or to doctrines, whatever is thus made manifest is *revealed*. If they bring conviction for sin—this is a *revelation*; according to the declaration of our Lord, “He shall convince the world of sin:” if consolation, in the lively hope of the gospel—this also is a revelation, agreeably to the language of the apostle, “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard,

neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath *revealed* them unto us by his Spirit," 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10. So that those secret influences, by which we become assured of the love of God, and our hopes in him, are, according to the doctrine of the apostle, *immediate*, divine revelations.

I may here observe, that, seeing all classes of Christians admit that immediate, divine revelation was a peculiar trait in the character of the primitive church—and that this, embracing the influences of the Holy Spirit, was the very *life* of Christianity, it appears extraordinary to me, that it should be supposed these had ceased in the true church! To me it is quite as extraordinary as the ideas which obtained admission into the church of Galatia, which drew that reproof of the apostle, "Oh! foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth?" "Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" Gal. iii. 1, 3.

But as it was in the outward coming of our Lord and Saviour, so it is in his inward and spiritual appearance.

The Jews were in expectation of his coming. Not only the time of his advent, but the manner in which he should come, had been set forth by the prophets. But, their views being outward, they fancied to themselves a Messiah with outward pomp and power, taking the throne of David, and raising the nation of the Jews to the very summit



of outward glory. And thus they overlooked him when he did come. His appearance was so simple, so humble—so different from the king they desired might come, that they denied, rejected, and finally crucified him.

And thus it is with many in the present day. They believe that immediate revelation is something so high—so exclusively conferred on the prophets and apostles, and necessarily accompanied with the knowledge of future events, and the power of working miracles, they cannot persuade themselves that either they, or any others, know any thing of it in this age of the world; while, at the same time, they overlook the lively operations of this very Spirit in their heart, convincing them of sin, inclining them to a life of holiness,—“teaching them that, denying ungodliness and the world’s lusts, they should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.”

This very something that secretly disquiets the mind, in the midst of earthly enjoyments, and prompts it to arise in living aspirations to the Father of mercies, setting before us the terrors of the Lord for sin, and the unspeakable excellence of an inheritance among them that are sanctified, is the Spirit of Jesus Christ: its dictates in our hearts are immediate, divine revelation.

And, though this principle in us is thus simple and low in its appearance, yet it is the power of God to salvation, to them that believe, producing effects no less miraculous than restoring the lame, the dumb, the deaf, and the blind. Nay, these

very things are accomplished in us. The dead are raised, even those who were dead in trespasses and sin, the blind see, the deaf hear, the dumb speak, and the gospel is preached to the poor.

No one, it is presumed, will deny the following declarations: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock, if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me," Rev. iii. 20. "My sheep hear my voice," John x. 27. And, where the voice of Christ is thus heard, there is immediate revelation; although it may be in those tender, secret influences which are too often overlooked and forgotten—but on which our eternal salvation must depend. For it is on condition of our listening to the voice of Christ, when he knocks at the door of our hearts, by these secret influences, and not only hearing him, but giving him admission to come in and rule pre-eminently there, that we can ever experience that near and intimate relation to take place between him and the soul, which is represented by his supping with us, and we with him.

And let it be remembered that, when we hear *his voice*, we have immediate revelation; for his "words they are Spirit, and they are life," John vi. 63.

Our Lord, on the occasion already referred to, when speaking of the Comforter, told his disciples, "And when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will reprove the world of sin," &c. *ib.* xvi. 8. And who is there that has not felt the reproofs



of instruction, and the convictions that some things were offensive to God? And, if the temptation has prevailed, has there not been a sense of condemnation impressed upon the mind—a feeling of that judgment, by which the prince of this world is judged? We may also appeal to the consciences of all men, if they have not, at times, felt the love of God to draw their hearts, in gratitude, to him,—if they have not seen the vanity, the mutability, and insignificance of earthly enjoyments, while the superior excellence of an inheritance eternal in the heavens has been, in some measure, presented to their view? Has not every individual, that is capable of religious reflection, felt that sentiment engraven on his heart, “verily, there is a reward for the righteous, verily, he is a God that judgeth in the earth,” Ps. lviii. 11. These secret convictions, these awful warnings against sin, and desires after happiness and acceptance with God, are the teachings of that grace which brings salvation. It is the Spirit of God working in us, to will and to do, of his own good pleasure.

However small its appearance may be, as it is *divine*, so it has *omnipotence* in it. It is not only quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart, but it is powerful to separate between the precious and the vile, as we submit to its operations, setting us free from the law of sin and death.

And, as there is, on the one hand, encouragement to receive, and submit to the influences of the Holy Spirit, in its least and most humble appear-

ances, even though it may be as low and humble as the babe in the manger, to trust in it, as the power of God to salvation, so there is an awful responsibility on us—for it is in this appearance of Christ in us, the hope of glory, that we may crucify to ourselves afresh the Son of God, and put him to an open shame, Heb. vi. 6.

As it is very possible to err in every point of doctrine, so it is possible in this. Seeing this is the only principle and ground of all saving knowledge in divine things, it is not strange that the grand enemy of man's happiness should exert his delusive power, to deceive those who profess to believe in divine revelation and the influence of the Holy Spirit. For, as they rely on this to guide in their important duties, and finally to lead them to eternal salvation, if they can be brought to follow a false principle, and to believe in it, as the Spirit of Jesus Christ, the enemy places them at once in the most dangerous situation, and the most difficult to be made sensible of their danger. And thus it is that "Satan is transformed into an angel of light." It will not follow that, because this divine principle may be neglected, and a seducing spirit be followed in its stead, that therefore the whole doctrine ought to be exploded.

And yet many, very many have become followers of the stranger, instead of the true shepherd.

No individual, whatever his capacity or outward circumstances may be, if he humbly, sincerely, and carefully attends to the teaching of the witness



for God in the soul, can possibly be brought under this delusion. If he keeps near his divine guide, listens attentively to his monitions, and suffers the feelings of gratitude and love to God to spread their influence over his heart, he cannot become the deluded follower of the transformer. But, if any should become inattentive to the divine Guide, instead of keeping near to him, enjoying the sustenance, comfort, and protection which he alone can give, they wander from his presence, and perhaps let that separation continue long—then it is that they are exposed to dangers on every side. The enemy is ever near at hand, nor is he more to be dreaded as a roaring lion, than in the character of the shepherd, by which the dread of danger is most effectually removed. But let it be remembered, that the danger all arises from one common principle. And it never can operate but in a state of separation from the presence of the preserving power. Neither the power nor stratagem of the enemy can possibly prevail against those who, in humility and watchfulness, cast their care on the Captain of our salvation.

It would be both a vain and presumptuous attempt, to describe those feelings which constitute the true evidence of divine influence; since nothing but that influence itself can give the capacity to decide between Christ and antichrist. But, in general, it may be remarked, that this influence leads into great watchfulness and humility. All confidence in ourselves, or in our own attainments, will be brought down. And, as we are

brought to feel our own weakness and unworthiness—we shall be brought more feelingly and fervently to desire the interposition of an Almighty Friend and Redeemer. As the evidences of his regard are felt, we shall experience the operations of that “faith which works by love, to the purifying of the heart.” And, if we love God, we shall also love our fellow-creatures. This love, like the source from which it proceeds, embraces the whole rational creation; but in an especial manner the household of faith. Like the apostle formerly, we desire to give offence, neither to Jew, nor Gentile, nor to the church of Christ. Far from separating us from the common walks and duties of life, it enables us to pass through the former, and fulfil the latter with more propriety. It gives to the ties of nature and society—such as husbands and wives, parents and children, brethren and friends—a strength and sweetness that were not found in them before. Where the parties united in these bonds of natural affection are mutual partakers of the bonds of gospel fellowship, there is an ample fulfilment of the promise of the hundred-fold in this life. But, even if one party alone should come under the government of this superior principle, the prevalence of that principle does not dissolve the common ties of natural affection, but increases them, sanctifies them—and, while it draws the veil of charity over the faults and failings of the friend or companion, prompts the powerful desire for their redemption,



and thus it holds out the invitation, "come, taste and see that the Lord is good."

The life of our blessed Lord exhibited an uninterrupted course of the purest morality, and never can his Spirit sanction immorality in any. Thus in the various relations of life, the divine influence, by regulating the affections, and giving ability to discharge our several duties with propriety, not only produces a course of true and rational morality, but abundantly heightens our enjoyments in this life.

The votaries of pleasure, or in more general terms, those who have not thoroughly submitted to the cross of Christ, are prone to the opinion, that this cross would be the death of their enjoyments. But if it were, it would afford others more pure, more exquisite and more permanent in their stead. But the idea is wrong in itself. The objects of revealed religion are, the glory of God, and the happiness of mankind. The requisitions of infinite Goodness are neither cruel nor unnecessary. We are called upon to give up nothing essential to happiness—nothing essential to the true dignity of man. The restrictions of the Gospel, point to those principles, passions, and feelings, which are inimical to happiness, both present and eternal—which disturb the order and harmony of our own bosoms, and of the world—and render us incapable of enjoying the harmony of heaven, either in anticipation here, or in endless fruition, hereafter.

These are the broad outlines of religion. It separates us from the great causes of moral evil;

and thus cuts off the sources of unhappiness. By properly balancing, correcting, and governing our passions, feelings, and expectations, it enables us to extract from the material world, whatever good it is capable of affording; securing us at the same time, from the stings of disappointment and the dissatisfaction of satiety. Nor is this all. Casting our care on our heavenly Father, and looking to a future state, for the full fruition of happiness, we secure to ourselves a place of refuge from all the storms of adversity, and feel not the full bitterness of a separation from earthly enjoyments.

But mark the contrast. The carnal mind clings with eagerness to objects, transient in their duration, or inimical to happiness in their nature. Examine the whole scope of human affairs, from the most innocent amusements, to the darkest shades of depravity and sin. Consider for a moment what would be the consequences, if the restraints of religion were removed, and all the passions of the human heart were let loose without control? From this state of depravity and wretchedness the restraints of religion withhold thee; and not only from this miserable condition here on earth, but from that dreadful abyss of horror, of which it would form but an imperfect prelude. But let us draw a more moderate picture. Suppose thyself engrossed by those objects and pursuits called innocent, deriving from them all the enjoyments they are capable of producing, without once looking beyond them. How poor, how precarious would, be thy pleasures, for they could not deserve the name of



happiness ! How liable would they be to be blasted by every breeze ! And how awful would *thy* situation be, when summoned to leave them for ever, without one ray, to light thy prospects to a happy eternity !

“ How shocking must thy summons be, O death !

To him that is at ease in his possessions.”

BLAIR.

Religion therefore, through the influences of the Holy Spirit, saves us from the miseries of sin, and the consequences of ungoverned passions, both in time and eternity. It leaves us in the full enjoyment of the real comforts of life, rendered a thousand times sweeter than they can be under the influence of corrupt inclinations. It serves as a sanctuary, to which we can resort, when every earthly comfort fails ; and opens to our prospects, and to our Spirits when separated from these tenelements of clay, a glorious immortality.

## CHAP. IX.

### OF WORSHIP.

THE subject of social or public worship, justly claims the attention of all religious denominations. But the varying opinions and practices which prevail among the different societies that profess Christianity, as well as the importance of the subject itself, might serve as an admonition to us, to approach it with unbiased minds.

Though worship or devotion, is the most solemn, the most awful, and the most sublime exercise in which the mind of man can be engaged, yet, in itself, it is simple. How awful it must be, for frail and erring creatures, to present themselves to the notice of that Omniscient Being, before whom the secrets of all hearts are unveiled! Well might the prophet, under a sense of the Divine Majesty, exclaim: “Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil?” Micah vi. 6, 7.

And yet how animating! What an unspeakable favour it is, for the soul to be permitted to approach



the throne of Grace, and pour forth its wants, its sorrows and desires before a Heavenly Father; feeling that his own divine influence give access to him, and forms the language of the prayer, the humble acknowledgement, or triumphant praise! And yet this solemn and sublime exercise, is simple. It requires neither wealth nor learning, nor extraordinary natural abilities, to perform it. It is within the reach of the simple, the illiterate, and the poor. It can be performed in solitude, as well as in the crowd—The splendour of temples, and the pomp of attendance, can add nothing to recommend it to the notice of Almighty God.

There is not a duty we owe, or a privilege we enjoy, more necessary or more simple than Divine Worship. But as the act itself can neither be performed nor comprehended, without the quickening, illuminating influence of the Spirit of Christ, so there is no religious duty, in which the wisdom of man has been more busy, or made greater innovations.

Let us, for a moment, look round, over the various nations denominated heathen, of ancient and modern times, and reflect on the wild, and even shocking modes, by which they have attempted to conciliate the Divine favour! Turning our attention from those whose opportunities have been comparatively limited, we shall still find that human invention has been busy, where revelation alone should have dictated—and to please the *creature* has been made an object, in the very acts which should have been addressed *only* to the *Creator*.

Under the legal Dispensation there was much external ceremony in their devotional exercises, which not only typified that spiritual worship which was afterwards to be more fully introduced, but was also calculated to make a deep impression on the minds of those who engaged in them. Their worship was to be performed in a magnificent temple. The richness and grandeur of its structure, the purity of its materials, the constant attendance of the priests, the solemnity of the sacrifices, all these were calculated, strongly to impress the mind with a sense of the Divine Majesty. In assembling at Jerusalem, the worshippers were necessarily withdrawn from their occupations and the cares of life. Neither the ordinary pursuits of domestic concerns, nor even the defence of their country, was to interrupt or divert their minds from these solemn assemblies—thus realizing the declaration, that “he that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

The sacrifices which were offered were to be “without blemish.” Nothing that was sick or blind, or that died of itself, was to be presented, as an offering to the Divine Majesty. In all this there was deep instruction. The whole subject was clothed with a dignity and solemnity peculiar to itself. Reverence, Adoration, and Confidence in God, were inculcated in all that pertained to that typical dispensation. And the greatest sincerity in the worshipper, and purity and perfection in the offerings, were requisites not to be dispensed with.



But all this form and outward glory, were only shadows of good things to come. It was not the external rituals of the Law, with all the pomp and splendour of the Temple, that drew the regard of God to those who worshipped there. Neither thousands of rams, nor ten thousands of rivers of oil, were regarded in comparison of an humble heart. But these forms and ceremonies, and this outward glory, were dispensed in condescension to their weakness, and designed, not only to point to the Messiah, but also to teach them of the divine majesty, and the abstraction and solemnity which their approaches to him required.

When our Lord was inquired of by the woman of Samaria, John iv. 24, respecting worship, he informed her, that "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth." Worship was not confined, either to the mountain of Samaria, nor yet to Jerusalem, but to be performed in spirit and in truth, without regard to local situation or outward circumstances.

The apostles bore testimony, that "God, that made the world, and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands, neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing," Acts xvii. 24, 25. And therefore the worship retained under the gospel, was of a pure and spiritual nature. Hence, we believe, that our approaches to him can only be *in spirit*, and *that* as a door of access is opened for us, by him that has the "key of David." But, without

a preparation of heart, no ceremonies can be acceptable.

“When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hands, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting,” Isa. i. 12, 13. If the Jews could not recommend themselves to his notice, merely by outward forms and ceremonies, even during the continuance of that typical dispensation, much less can we, since those ceremonies have been abrogated by the coming of Jesus Christ. We cannot consistently come before him, with a set form of words, prepared before hand, and committed to memory, because we know not what to pray for as we ought; and still less can we clothe these addresses in music, as if God would be pleased with tones and instruments of music, as the volatile and fashionable part of mankind; or as if the most solemn acts of devotion were to be converted into opportunities of amusement and creaturely gratification. When we plan our devotions to please our *own* ears, does not an important query arise, whether we serve ourselves and one another—or God in these exercises?

This subject opens a field of serious inquiry, into which every religious denomination—nay, every individual should impartially enter. I feel a solicitude that all may examine the subject for themselves: let nothing detain them in the outward



court, which will be trodden down of the Gentiles—but, animated by the promises, and aided by the influence of our Lord and Saviour, “come boldly to the throne of grace,” into a holy union and communion with God.

When some, formerly, were urging our Lord to go to the feast of tabernacles, he said unto them, “My time is not yet come: but your time is alway ready,” John vii. 6. And his disciples can often adopt a similar language, feeling their utter incapacity, of themselves, for any good word or work: and that they know not what to pray for as they ought, without the helping influence of the Spirit of truth; and therefore they cannot presume to set about this solemn engagement, without the necessary qualification. For, if “no man can call Jesus Lord, but by the Holy Ghost,” how can any act of devotion be performed without this influence? Neither prayer, praise, nor thanksgiving can be acceptable, unless it arise from a sensible feeling in our hearts; which is produced only by the operation of grace there. This brings us into a sense of our own condition, and gives access to the Father of mercies. Worship, performed without these qualifications, must be *will-worship*, and as unacceptable as those outward pretences of the Jews, while their hearts were far from God.

We therefore believe it right, when we assemble for the purpose of divine worship, to sit down in reverent silence; endeavouring to abstract our minds from all things but the one great Object of

adoration. And, in this humble, waiting state of mind, to remain in silence, unless we should be favoured with the qualification and command for vocal language, in preaching, prayer, or praise.

God is a Spirit, and can only be approached by spirit. Hence, vocal sound is not necessary to convey to him the desires which his own divine influence has raised in our hearts. Language is only necessary to convey sentiments from man to man. Our Father, who seeth in secret, and who knows what we need, before we ask him, and who enables us, by the help of his own divine influence, to make intercession according to his will—sees, hears, and knows what thus passes in the secret of the heart, without the intervention of words.

When a number of individuals thus sit down, in solemn silence, waiting upon God, their minds being abstracted from all inferior objects, and their spirits engaged in exercise for the arising of the word of life, a spiritual communion is felt, and they are mutually helpful to each other. The heavenly virtue and solemnity is felt to flow as from vessel to vessel. For, when a meeting is thus gathered in the name and power of Christ, he is often pleased to appear among them in great glory, revealed to that perception and quickened understanding, which is the effect of his own divine work in their hearts. All this may be effected, though there may not have been a word spoken in the meeting.

There is, in silent worship, something so beautiful, so sublime, so consistent with the relation in



which we stand to God, that it appears strange there should exist a single doubt of its propriety.

Besides the impossibility of our approaching the Supreme Being, without his helping influence, and the unreasonableness of our supposing this influence to be at our command, we may be “all with one accord in one place,” under the influence of the “one spirit,” and each spreading his own peculiar condition, his wants, his sorrows, doubts or humble acknowledgments, before his Almighty Friend, without confusion, without interruption to each other, but with a sensible increase of solemnity over all.

This worship depends not on priest, or minister, Jesus Christ being himself the High Priest, and minister of the true tabernacle, which God hath pitched and not man. And here let it be remembered, that when we engage in acts of worship, or what may be called active devotion, without feeling the true qualification for it, but merely as a duty, and make use of a form of words, prepared before hand—our animal passions may be excited by the very exercises thus entered into, and, in the fervour of our zeal, we may not be able to distinguish the sparks of our own kindling, from the influences of Grace: “for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.” 2 Cor. xi. 14. But when we settle down into true stillness, and experience our own wills and activity brought thoroughly down, and “every thought to the obedience of Christ”—then indeed the transformations of the enemy cannot deceive—but the language of

the apostle is realized—"We know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death."

This silent Worship has often been a cause of wonder, and remains to be considered by many, an unmeaning and absurd practice. But if we admit that worship requires a peculiar qualification, and that it is impossible to enter into *acts of devotion* without this qualification, it will follow, that when assembled for this solemn purpose, if the qualification is not possessed by those thus assembled, they must either humbly wait upon God for it, or be chargeable with will-worship, if they presume to go on without it. If those assembled should thus wait, a silent meeting would be the consequence. And who can suppose this inconsistent with the nature of the object in view? Can it be supposed that men, collected from the ordinary and perplexing business and cares of life, or perhaps from the giddy rounds of pleasure, or even from the deep shades of depravity and guilt, should be at once prepared to enter into this most solemn engagement, without any introversion of mind, without collecting their wandering thoughts, and, in the language of the apostle, "feeling after God?" And how can this be more consistently done than in solemn silence?

Thus, from the very nature of the subject, silence appears to be generally, if not *always*, necessary, as a preparation to worship. But we also believe, for the reasons already suggested, that *worship may*



*be performed in silence.* It being an intercourse between God and the soul, and that intercourse being necessarily in spirit, it may take place without the medium of words. That feeling desire, that secret aspiration of the soul, which is known only by Him to whom it is directed, is an act of devotion, more acceptable than any form of words that could be uttered, if unaccompanied with the same devotional feelings.

We read “there was silence in Heaven.” But we cannot suppose that devotion was suspended. Indeed there is a devotion which language cannot reach: when not only the activity of the creature, is completely brought into quiet, but when the Divine Majesty is so revealed—His Wisdom, Goodness, Power, and Glory—that every faculty of the soul, is held in awful, silent adoration!

Hence we consider silence, not only proper, as preparatory to worship, but congenial to the most sublime worship to which we can attain.

We are aware that individuals may sit down in *silent* meetings, without being benefitted by it. They may suffer their minds to be occupied with improper objects, or they may sink down into a state of dulness and insensibility, totally incompatible with the important objects, for which they profess to assemble. But these are not the necessary consequences of silent waiting. Indeed *they never are the consequences of it*, but of an unprepared and lukewarm mind. The promise remains true to the present day, and will to all succeeding ages—“they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their

strength." Isa. xl. 31. The command is addressed to *us*, as forcibly as it was to the ancient Jews—"Be still, and know that I am God."—"Keep silence before me, O Islands! and let the people renew their strength."

"Without me," said our Lord, "ye can do nothing." Happy are they who know their own spirits brought into subjection, and an humble dependance on Him—not daring to "kindle a fire or compass themselves about with sparks,"—but humbly wait on God, for a qualification to worship him in Spirit and in Truth.

Though public and private devotion, depend on the influences of the same Spirit, and have therefore been considered in connexion, in the preceding part of this chapter, yet there is a distinction to be drawn; though the performance of the one cannot destroy the occasion for the other. On the contrary, they reciprocally promote each other. For he that is properly engaged in secret, religious exercises from day to day, will thereby be better qualified for the performance of public worship: and on the other hand, the right performance of social worship, will greatly contribute to dispose the mind to hold on its way, in those secret desires after communion with God, to which the apostle alluded, when he admonished the believers, to "pray without ceasing."

The public assembling of Christians, to wait upon and worship God, not only places them in a situation to be helpful to each other, by the communication of their feelings, under divine influence,



in preaching and vocal prayer, and also by a secret communion of spirit, but it is a reasonable acknowledgment of the goodness of God, and our dependence upon him, for every thing we yet hope for, as well as of our gratitude for the blessings already conferred upon us. Well therefore did the apostle admonish the believers: "Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works; not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is." Heb. x. 24, 25. And again: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." Rom. xii. 1.

## CHAP. X.

### OF THE MINISTRY.

WE believe, with the apostles, that “no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.” Heb. v. 4. And that this call is not dependent on any human acquirements. We also believe the command of our Blessed Lord, to his disciples, is of lasting obligation, “freely ye have received, freely give.” Matt. x. 8.

These are leading principles of our belief concerning the ministry.

But in order to understand this subject, we must advert a little more particularly to the call and qualification of a gospel minister, and then bring into view the maintenance which is warranted on Gospel principles.

The call of a minister, as already observed, must be of God. No man can enter into this dignified work, merely from his *willing* or running. He cannot preach the gospel unless he be sent. And if Christ send not, of course he is not a messenger or minister of Christ.

Hence no man can choose for himself or his son, the work of the ministry, as he would a trade, by



which to obtain emolument or reputation. The ministers of the Gospel, to the present day, must be called by the same authority, and clothed with the same influence that the apostles had, though it may not be in the same degree. *They*, by virtue of their call and qualification, were *messengers and ambassadors* of Jesus Christ. Who then can assume these high titles, without having received a message to deliver, or a commission to fulfil from Christ? Without these, the very essentials are wanting.

And what is a *minister of the Gospel*? Does not the very term itself assert the doctrine we have advanced? The *Gospel*, is not a system of abstract truths or propositions—It “is the power of God to salvation.” And he that receives a dispensation of it to preach to others, actually does *minister* it, to those whose hearts are prepared to receive it. Thus, according to another metaphor of the holy Scriptures, he becomes a vessel, through which this precious treasure passes to the objects of Redeeming Love. But he that has not received such a dispensation of the *Gospel*, to preach to others, cannot possibly be a *minister* of the Gospel: because he has not the Gospel to communicate. On the contrary, he “has neither part nor lot in the matter.” He may be a minister of certain tenets or opinions. He may be a minister of the commandments and traditions of men, if he has indeed received these. But without the power of God, making him a minister of the Spirit, and not of the letter, his preaching never can be of divine authority, nor in “the demonstration of the Spirit and power.”

It deserves to be noticed, that, in the records which have been left us of the first religious meetings of the primitive believers, it is particularly mentioned, when any of the apostles were engaged to speak in their religious assemblies, that they were “filled with the Holy Ghost.” The manner in which it is expressed, is quite remarkable—“Then Peter,” or James, or whoever it might be, “*being filled with the Holy Ghost*”—stood up, &c. clearly implying, that without this immediate qualification, even the apostles did not enter on these important duties.

Our Lord, in giving instruction to his ministers, whom he sent out while he was on earth, gave them to understand, that they were to preach nothing but what they had heard from *him*. “What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light, and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the house tops.” And even when brought before kings and governors, for the testimony they bore, he charged them to take no thought how, or what they should speak: for it should be given them in that same hour what they should speak; for it was not *they* that spoke, but the Spirit of their Father that spoke in them. Matt. x. 27, and 18—20. The instructions to the prophet, enjoined the same thing: “Thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me.” Ezek. xxxiii. 7. And “other foundation,” saith the apostle, “can no man lay than that is laid,” 1 Cor. iii. 11, and on which the prophets and apostles were built. Eph. ii. 20. This living ministry, wholly from Divine inspiration,



was evidently introduced and established as the ministry of Jesus Christ; and we cannot suppose, that it ever was designed to be essentially or radically changed in its nature. We cannot, like the Galatians, in another case, (Gal. iii. 3.) suppose that Gospel ministry was begun in the Spirit, and afterwards to be continued by the natural or acquired abilities of man. For the object is the same, through all ages: being to open the eyes of mankind, and “turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God:” Acts xxvi. 18; and to edify the body of Christ. And no man, by his natural or acquired abilities, ever was or ever will be capable of this; as the apostle bore testimony, “Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God: who also hath made us able ministers of, the New Testament: *not of the letter, but of the Spirit*; for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life,” 2 Cor. iii. 5, 6.

Thus the ministry was constituted in the beginning, under the highest authority, and we are bound to believe that it is still of the same nature, and must be conducted on the same principles. In vain may we look in the Scriptures of truth, for a divine sanction of a ministry, entered into in the will of man, and exercised without immediate, divine revelation.

The qualification for the ministry is called a *gift*. It is the testimony of the apostles, in a great number of places. Paul expresses himself in the following manner: “Though I have the *gift* of

prophecy," 1 Cor. xiii. 2. "I was made a minister, according to the *gift* of the grace of God, given unto me, by the effectual working of his power." Eph. iii. 7. To Timothy he says, "Neglect not the *gift* that is in thee," 1 Tim. iv. 14. In his Epistle to the Romans he says, "Having then *gifts* differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith: or ministry, let us wait on our ministering, or he that teacheth, on teaching, or he that exhorteth, on exhortation," Rom. xii. 6, 7. To the Corinthians he says, "Now there are diversities of *gifts*, but the same Spirit, and there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God, which worketh all in all." "For to one is *given, by the Spirit*, the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge, *by the same Spirit*; to another, *faith, by the same Spirit*; to another, the *gifts of healing, by the same Spirit*; to another, the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues; but all these worketh that one and the self-same *Spirit*, dividing to every man severally as he will," 1 Cor. xii. 4—12.

The apostle Peter says, "As every man hath *received the gift*, even so minister the same, one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God," 1 Pet. iv. 10.

From all these passages, and many more that



might be selected, but which I omit for the sake of brevity, it is very clear, that the qualification for the ministry is the pure *gift of God*; which gift is bestowed upon every man severally as he will. There are diversities of gifts, and differences of administrations, and diversities of operations, but it is the same Spirit—the same God that worketh all in all. A divine influence and power calling and preparing them, and directing them in the exercise of their gifts, is the important object here brought into view. Thus, we know, the ministry was at first constituted and exercised. And we may boldly assert, that nothing can deserve the name of gospel ministry, which has not God for its author, and his immediate influence for its director.

Man, indeed, may deliver elegant orations, by the strength of his natural or acquired abilities, and this he may do, either extemporaneously, or prepared before-hand, and committed to memory. They may be couched in the language of Christ, and of his true ministers, in different ages. They may produce much creaturely zeal, both in the speakers and hearers, and powerfully move the natural passions, and yet produce no real conversion to God, nor advancement of his cause. While the true minister, though it may not be with excellency of speech, but in weakness, and fear, and in much trembling, may yet be in the demonstration of the Spirit and power, reaching the consciences of the audience, and answering to the witness of God there.

The call being of God, and the qualification by the effectual working of his power, it follows that human authority, the will of man, or human acquirements cannot constitute a gospel ministry. In the primitive church, the apostles were mostly illiterate men, and of what are considered mean occupations, such as fishermen, &c. For God made choice of the weak, the foolish, and despised things of this world, to confound the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nought the understanding of the prudent—*that no flesh might glory in his presence*. And this remains to be the case, down to the present day. He will not give his glory to another, nor his praise to graven images. To those who run and are not sent, the query still forcibly applies: “Who hath required this at your hands?” Isa. i. 12.

The great apostle of the Gentiles was not made a minister by man, nor in the will of man, but necessity was laid upon him, and he felt that woe was to him, if he preached not the gospel—a dispensation of which had been committed to him. He also acknowledged, “By the grace of God I am what I am.” And all true ministers, as such, should be able to adopt the same language.

That both natural and acquired abilities are not excluded from the work of the ministry, will be readily granted; and that, when they are sanctified and brought under the qualifying power of grace, they may eminently promote the honour of God, and the good of mankind. What is insisted on is, that education is not *essential* to the qualifications



of a gospel minister; and that no man can put himself into the ministry without the immediate call and influence of the Holy Spirit. None of the prophets ever became such without this immediate call; and all the apostles and true ministers in the church of Christ were so called and qualified. Even those who had been the companions of Christ in the flesh, who saw his miracles, heard his precepts, and were empowered to work miracles themselves, were commanded to "tarry at Jerusalem, till they were indued with power from on high;" clearly proving that nothing but power from on high, renewedly furnished, can enable men to preach the gospel. And how can it be otherwise? since the gospel, as already observed, is the power of God to salvation: even that same power by which all things were made, that were made.

Unto the wicked the language remains to be, "What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldst take my covenant in thy mouth, seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee," Psalm l. 16, 17. It is only as the grace of God is received, and its purifying operations submitted to, that the individual becomes prepared for this high and holy calling. To this also agrees the command of our Lord to Peter, "When thou art converted strengthen thy brethren," Luke xxii. 32.; and, finally, after his resurrection, when he was about giving Peter that charge to feed his sheep and lambs, how closely did he press the inquiry, "Lovest thou me!" Nor

was the important commission given, till Peter could appeal to Him, "Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." "Yea, Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee." And this must all true ministers be able to say, in humility and sincerity, through the influence of the love of God, sanctifying the heart, to which must be superadded, the special call to the important work. To the man who has not experienced this renovation, the whole subject is wrapped in impenetrable mystery. The vail being on his own understanding, he cannot possibly be able to explain to others, the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven; much less can he deliver the messages of God to his children.

When the excellencies of the Gospel dispensation were seen in prophetic vision, the work of the ministry was particularly brought into view. "And it shall come to pass, in the last days, (saith God,) I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my hand-maidens, will I pour out, in those days, of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy." Acts ii. 17, 18.

If it should here be objected, that though the gift of prophecy was received under the law, and also in the days of the apostles, yet this gift has now ceased in the Church.

I may reply, that this is contrary to the view which was clearly presented in the foregoing passage of Scripture. The prophet was not merely



representing the *manner* in which the New Covenant Dispensation would be *introduced*, but he was describing the very nature of the dispensation itself, and its prominent and permanent characteristics.

The apostle encouraged the believers to desire the best gifts, but rather that they might prophesy. And what he thus wrote, "was written for *our* instruction," as well as for the instruction of those to whom it was immediately addressed, But it may be further remarked, that prophesying in the Scripture acceptation, is not confined to the foretelling of future events. The apostle applies it to "speaking unto men, (from divine influence,) to edification, and exhortation, and comfort." 1 Cor. xiv. 3. And it is declared in the Book of Revelations, that "the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy." Rev. xix. 10.

And the apostle Peter gave this impressive charge : "If any man speak, let him speak as the Oracles of God, and if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ." 1 Peter iv. 11. The prophecy of Joel, and the testimony of the same apostle, clearly attribute prophesying to the pouring out of the Spirit. From all which it follows, that if it is still necessary in the Church, to speak to men to edification, to exhortation, and comfort—if the testimony of Jesus is still necessary to be maintained among his disciples, then the Spirit of prophecy does still exist : and the exercise of the ministry is to be, as it

originally was, from immediate, divine influence.

The admonitions of the apostles, in relation to the ministry, must be applicable to *us*, unless we would break in upon the whole body of Scripture doctrine and precept. And if these precepts are applicable to us at all, it must be in the same sense in which they were applicable to those, to whom they were immediately addressed. And the whole course of precepts, relating to the ministry, did recognize the necessity of a divine call and qualification, through the immediate operation of the Holy Spirit: for such was the ministry of that day. Therefore, if such was the meaning which the inspired writers of the New Testament, intended to convey to the ministers and believers then—such is their true meaning—and we must receive them in that same sense, or we have nothing to do with them at all. This will necessarily lead us to the admission of the principle I have laid down, or we must give up the whole body of Scripture doctrine and precept.

The prophecy of Joel, as quoted by the apostle Peter, deserves to be more particularly brought into view. “And it shall come to pass in the *last days*, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my hand-maidens I will pour out, in those days, of my spirit; and they shall prophesy.” Acts ii. 17, 18.

The first thing to be noticed in this prophecy is



the time, in which it was to be fulfilled; that is, *in the last days*. If it did take place, in the days of the Apostles, as Peter bore testimony that it did, and does not continue to the present time, it would not be *in the last days*. But this would deny the truth of the prophecy in the very outset.

In the next place, we may observe that the promise of the affusion of the Holy Spirit, was to sons and daughters—servants and hand-maidens. This portion of Scripture brings into view the question whether females are ever called to the ministry or not. To say that they *are not*, would at once be calling in question the authorities just quoted. The promise of the Spirit, and the qualification to prophesy, is as positive to the daughters and hand-maidens, as to the sons and servants. And the apostle bore as ample testimony to its fulfilment in the one case as in the other. He knew that females had prophesied under the former dispensation, such as Miriam, and Deborah, and Huldah. The prophetess Anna, bore testimony to the coming of the Messiah, as well as did the good old Simeon. Nor can the prophecy of Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, be considered less remarkable than any which preceded it. It was a woman, to whom that clear exposition of worship was given at Jacob's well. And she was actively engaged to invite others to "come and see a man that told me all that ever I did, is not this the Christ?" And so effectually did she preach Christ, that many believed from her testimony, and sought him for themselves. It was a woman that first an-

nounced the glorious tidings of the resurrection of our blessed Lord. And let it be remembered that these *glad* tidings were preached to the apostles themselves, who at that time were sunk into despair. They were then scattered as sheep without a shepherd; and all their prospects were involved in gloom. How animating then, was the message which the Divine Master sent by a woman: "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and your God." John xx. 17. Priscilla as well as Aquila, instructed the eloquent Apollos more perfectly in the nature of the Gospel dispensation. And numerous cases are mentioned in the New Testament, of *prophetesses*, and, "women who laboured in the Gospel."

But several passages in the writings of the apostle Paul, have been construed into objections to women's preaching: such for instance, as the following: "Let your women keep silence in the Churches, for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but *they are commanded* to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the Church." 1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35. But the speaking alluded to, was very clearly a troublesome asking of questions, which could be answered better at home, than in their religious meetings.

That the asking of questions had become troublesome, is obvious from the following considerations. When the Gospel was first preached, it



excited astonishment in the minds of a large number of those who heard it. It was, "to the Jews, a *stumbling block*, and to the Greeks, *foolishness*." And even to the sober and sincere inquirers, it presented mysteries, in which they desired to be more perfectly instructed. Hence it became common for doctrinal questions to be asked. And this practice, in time, by being abused, led into an impertinent, inquisitive disposition respecting unimportant things. Hence, the apostle cautioned Timothy not to "give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister *questions* rather than edifying." 1 Tim. i. 4. And in the same Epistle, he further cautions him against some who were "proud, knowing nothing, but doting about *questions* and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railing, evil surmising, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth." 1 Tim. vi. 4, 5. And in 2 Tim. ii. 23, he charges him: "But foolish and unlearned *questions* avoid, knowing that they do gender strife." He gives the same caution to Titus, iii. 9. From all which it is clear that the asking of *questions* had become troublesome in their religious meetings; and as he makes so direct an allusion to such inquiries, or "questions, in the text under consideration, ("let them ask their husbands at home, for it is a shame," &c.) it is at least a fair inference that he designed to put a stop to this: but had no allusion to the exercise of a gift of the ministry. Indeed we cannot suppose, that the apostle would attempt to prove the impropriety of their taking a

part in the ministry, by reminding them that they might ask questions of their husbands at home. What imaginable relation could this bear to the case in hand? What question could a pious female ask at home of her husband, that would relieve her mind from the burden of a message she had received, to deliver in the church, to relieve her from the exercise of a gift in the ministry? Thus it is evident, as the prohibition of the apostle, in the passage above cited, related to asking of questions, and such as could properly be answered by their husbands at home—it had no relation to the exercise of a gift in the ministry.

Their usurpation of authority over the man, as prohibited by the apostle, related, I should suppose, to their *domestic* concerns; for preaching the gospel is not usurping authority, and has nothing to do with it. Our Lord, on a certain occasion, reminded his disciples, “Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise *authority* upon them. But it shall not be so among you:”—“but whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant,” Matt. xx. 25—27.

But what puts the question beyond all doubt, as to the sentiments of the apostle, is, that he actually gave directions how the women should behave while in the exercise of the ministry: he uses the words, “prayeth” and “prophesieth,” 1 Cor. xi. 5. Which he certainly would not have done, had it been prohibited. He not only gave such directions, but he mentions, with peculiar



regard, certain women that had laboured with him in the gospel, Phil. iv. 3. And Philip the Evangelist had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy, Acts xxi. 9.

Seeing that females were admitted to the high office of *prophecy* under the legal dispensation, and that in the promise of the more general affusion of this gift, the daughters and hand-maidens were equally included with the other sex—that they actually were among the first messengers of the gospel—and finally that they “did prophesy,” and “labour in the gospel,” after the churches were formed and settled, and received particular instructions how to conduct themselves in the church, in the exercise of this gift, it is strange that the privilege should ever have been called in question. We are informed, on the authority of divine revelation, that male and female are *one* in Christ Jesus—that in the relation in which they both stand to him, the distinction is as completely broken down, as between Jew and Gentile—bond and free. Thus, revelation has made known the important truth—and reason will bear testimony to the same thing. The mind of the female is susceptible of all those sensibilities, affections, and improvements which constitute the Christian character. In a state of renovation, we must admit, it has equal access to the fountain of light and life. And, if we reflect on the natural faculties, which are brought into requisition for preaching the gospel, we shall readily perceive, that they are not destitute of these. Indeed experience has proved,

that many females have possessed these qualifications in an eminent degree. The range of thought, the facility of communicating their ideas in appropriate language, the sympathy with suffering humanity—a deep and lively sense of gratitude to God, and of the beauty of holiness—a zeal for the honour of God, and the happiness of his rational creatures—all these are found among the female part of the human family, *at least* as frequently and as eminently as among the men. But the essential qualification for the ministry is a special call. It is a special gift, distributed to every one severally, according to the divine will. And there must be a preparation of heart for this; for it cannot dwell with impurity. There is no communion between light and darkness—Christ and Belial. So that the individual on whom this gift is conferred must attain, in a good degree, to purity of mind. And here, again, no objection can be made against the female character, when brought into comparison with the other sex.

Thus, neither in *reason*, nor in *nature*, can there be found sufficient grounds for excluding them from the ministry. It rests entirely on the divine Head of the church—whether he confers upon them this gift or not. It is his prerogative to send by whom he will send, and we have no right to interfere with his government, nor arrogate to ourselves, what belongs exclusively to him.

The Society of Friends allow no salaries, for the support of their ministers, believing it right that they should minister to their own necessities.



The ministry never was designed for a *trade*: for the true ministers do not take the oversight of the church for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind, 1 Pet. v. 2. The prospect of gain never can direct their views or labours to any particular place, for, if money is the call, they cannot have the authority of Christ. And yet we do not suppose, that all those ministers are actuated by these motives, who, according to the rules of the Society to which they belong, are provided with a maintenance.

But the Society of Friends never have put their ministers on a worse footing than the *poor* among them. We feel ourselves bound to administer to *their necessities*, as well as to the necessities of others, in like circumstances. We know that those who saw the servants of Christ sick, or hungry, or in need of clothing, or in prison, and did not administer to them, had *this*, as a heavy charge against them, in the day of final retribution, (vide Matt. xxv.) We also know that the Gentile converts administered to the *poor saints* at Jerusalem; the apostle very forcibly arguing, that if the Gentiles had partaken of their spirituals, it was not unreasonable that *they* should partake of their temporals. And the Philippians sent once and again, to relieve the necessities of the apostle Paul, Phil. iv. Accordingly, if our ministers need pecuniary aid, we afford it, and consider ourselves bound to do so, as well as to relieve the necessities of the *poor* who are not in this station. When ministers leave their homes, their domestic enjoyments, and occupations, to spread the glad tidings

of the gospel, without any motives of a sordid nature, there are strong obligations on those whom they visit, to sympathize with them in their various trials, and to relieve their necessities.

But all this, though it proves that true ministers of the gospel are entitled to hospitality where they go, in the exercise of the ministry, and that they ought to have their necessities supplied, if they are not able to support themselves; does not at all militate against the belief, that the gospel never can be made an article of bargain and sale, like merchandize in the market, or like a man's professional skill. Feeling, like the apostle, necessity laid upon them, they dare not let pecuniary considerations, in the *smallest* degree, influence their minds. They dare not measure their *gifts* by money, or set a monied value on their services, or receive hire, or claim any thing from their hearers as a matter of *right*, or withhold their labours if pecuniary advantages are not offered, for woe is to them, if they preach not the gospel. They must go where their Lord and Master may be pleased to send them, looking to *Him*, and to Him only, for their *reward*.

Not a trace can be found in the New Testament, to show that the ministers of the gospel ever directed their travels where they could get the most money, or that they ever made a monied contract for preaching, or even that they were ever influenced, in any of their movements, by such considerations.

The practice of the Society of Friends corresponds



with these views. Their ministers are not considered at liberty to travel or appoint meetings, without being first approved as ministers, and acknowledged as such, by the Society in its official capacity. And, when they are concerned to travel in the ministry, they are to lay their prospects, as to each particular visit, before their own monthly meeting. And, if the proposed visit extend beyond the limits of the yearly meeting to which they belong, the concurrence of the Quarterly Meeting is required. The meeting which sets them at liberty to travel, takes care that they are provided with suitable company; and, if their circumstances render it necessary, they are also provided with means, by which they can keep themselves from being chargeable, when among those who are not of their own profession.

Thus, while there is a careful guard, on one hand, to avoid every thing that could operate, in itself, as an *inducement* of a pecuniary nature, we are careful that our ministers, who are in limited circumstances, should not, from that cause, be prevented from the full exercise of their gifts.

As nothing tends so powerfully to lay waste the church, as a corrupt or unsound ministry; so the adversary has always been busy, to insinuate himself into this department of the church. If he can, by any means, draw men into that office, who have neither part nor lot in the matter—if they are destitute of the life and Spirit of Christ, in themselves, no matter how eloquent they may be, or however they may store their minds with the language of

those who have been divinely inspired: their popularity and seeming holiness only the more powerfully tend to divert the minds of their hearers from the pure principle of life in themselves.

Not only are those who were never called or prepared to enter into the ministry, thus intruded into the office, but the enemy is not lacking, in his attempts to "draw down," if possible, the very "stars of heaven."

When, therefore, an individual believes himself called to the ministry, great care should be taken, at the setting out.

It is necessary that he should not only have experienced the love of God, in its tendering impressions, but in those more powerful operations, which are designed to consume "the dross, the tin, and even the reprobate silver."

As these purifying dispensations go on, and communion and peace with God are enjoyed, He will be pleased to carry on the preparation of those whom he designs to make "ministers of the Spirit, and not of the letter."

The apprehension of being called to this work will be presented with great weight and awfulness, and when the mind is most under the divine influence. Nor will this be attended with the exaltation of the creature, but, on the contrary, with deep humility and self-abasement.

These preparatory exercises, if properly endured, will work that reduction of the natural will, which is necessary, in order to enable the individual, not only to distinguish the divine influence from



every other impression, but also to speak from that influence, without any mixture of other springs of action. During these exercises, various conflicts, doubts, and fears may be expected to arise in the mind; but, if they serve to bring it into greater humility, and more constant and entire dependance on God, it will be found that even these afflictive dispensations have been both in wisdom and in fatherly regard. There are many who can acknowledge that "tribulation worketh patience. and patience experience, and experience hope—and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in the heart," Rom. v. 4. It is on the operations of divine power, in every stage of preparation and of service, that we must rely, agreeably to the testimony of Scripture, "The preparation of the heart, and the answer of the tongue are of the Lord."

But, while there should not be, in such persons, a dependance on secondary resources, or a looking out for instrumental help, there should be an openness to receive the counsel and admonition of their friends; for he who sets himself beyond the reach of Christian caution and instruction cannot be upon safe ground.

They must feel that their natural and acquired abilities cannot enable them to fill the important station, and, in Christian humility, they will be ready to adopt the language, "Who is sufficient for these things?"

It is thus, through weakness and fear, that the Head of the church is pleased to lead his true

ministers, that they may put no confidence in the flesh or in themselves, but in Him alone, whose “strength is made perfect in weakness.”

Not always knowing what is best for us, we may desire to have, in the beginning, more extensive views and prospects of what is to be delivered, than is consistent with divine wisdom. “I have many things to say unto you,” said our Lord, “but ye cannot bear them now”—and this may be as applicable to the messages of the gospel, as to any other revelation. Those extensive prospects that may be desired by the creature, may be far beyond its capacity to bear; and hence, in the tender dealings of a gracious Father, they are withheld. He who would have his ministers to hear the word at *his* mouth, and warn or instruct the people from *him*—who would lead his servants into deep dependence on him alone, and not on themselves, will, when it is best to be so, communicate the message to be delivered, sentence by sentence; that they may walk by faith, and not by sight. It is of the first importance, that we should distinguish between the workings of our own spirits, and the influence of the Spirit of Christ. It is instructive to remember, that the divine intelligence was uttered to the prophet in “a still small voice;” and thus it continues to the present day. When the will, the wisdom, and all the passions of man are brought into silence,—in this state of quiet waiting, the mind is in the best situation to be brought so under the government of



the divine influence, as to "speak as of the ability which God giveth."

Satan is spoken of, in the Scriptures, as being transformed into an angel of light. And we have no reason to believe that he is not as busy and as artful in his transformations as ever he was, in any age of the world. Thus he has often promoted the kingdom of darkness, by an apparent zeal for religion. And thousands have encompassed themselves with sparks, and warmed themselves with the fire of their own kindling, and, in the end, have realized the sentence, that they should lie down in sorrow. Neither the busy workings of the creaturely will, nor the reasoning faculty of the human mind can ever bring forth any thing as ministry, that will benefit the speaker or the hearers. That passage in Matt. vii. 22, seems to have reference to this view of the subject, "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works—and then will I profess unto them, I never knew you."

Fair, specious prospects may be presented to the mind—wide fields of doctrine, in which there may be large scope for the display of eloquence, and yet all this may have no application to the state of the meeting, and no authority from the Head of the church.

"My sheep," said Christ, "hear my voice, and they follow me, and the voice of a stranger they

will not follow." The attentive mind will be able to discover the difference, but nothing short of the divine influence itself can be the true evidence.

It is well known to those who have been led into this experience, that much perturbation of mind may very easily arise, on these awful occasions; and that such may, at times, be ready to sink under the conflict of feelings that takes place. Some of these feelings may be regarded as resembling the earthquake, the whirlwind, and the fire. Great and distressing conflicts may take place, as preparatory to the call and command to move. But this is not the only kind of conflicts to be noticed. All those emotions which arise from a fear of the assembly, or of any individuals in it, ought to be overcome, for the "fear of man bringeth a snare," and will unfit the minister. When a true prospect presents to the mind, it will generally, if not always, be with *calmness*. And it is of importance that that calmness should not be disturbed. But it will be disturbed, if place is given to any other feelings, reflections, or reasonings, instead of simple attention to the pure gift, and the admonition of the apostle, "Be instant in season." Thus moving on, with undivided attention to the openings of the Word of life, and the faith and ability afforded—the minister will be enabled to arise with the arising of divine power.

The admonition of the apostle applies as fully to closing as to beginning. The text is, "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doc-



trine," 2 Tim. iv. 2. Thus, in preaching the word, we are *instantly* to speak in season, and *instantly* to be silent out of season. The latter part of the text, "Reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine," is but an enumeration of the objects to be attended to in the exercise of the ministry. The apostle never could have directed any thing to be done out of season, for this will always produce disorder and confusion: but his admonition, on the contrary, was, that every thing should be done "*in order*," 1 Cor. xiv. 4.

When, therefore, a minister has been properly qualified, and engaged in preaching the word—when, by being instant in season, he has begun well, and been enabled to edify his brethren—let him be equally careful to be instant—or instantly out of season; for, should he fail in this, he will inevitably bring a burden on himself and on the meeting.

But, if any should suppose that their own natural abilities or acquirements are sufficient for this important work—or if they should suppose, that, from their past experience, they are able to preach the gospel, without the immediate aid and influence of the Spirit of Christ, "they yet know nothing as they ought to know," and will be found in the corrupt and false ministry.

The more we advance in experience, the more deeply shall we be impressed with a sense of our dependance upon God, through Jesus Christ, and that "without him we can do nothing." No man

can be released from this dependance, without ceasing, at the same time, to be a servant of Christ.

There is, however, a strong propensity in the creature, to assert its own independence. It is painful and humiliating to the naturally proud mind of man, to be in this dependant state—to be made a spectacle to angels and to men, and to be accounted a fool for Christ's sake; and, after many times of favour and enlargement in the ministry, to sink down into nothingness of self. But this is the beaten path, which the apostles themselves, and all true ministers, down to the present day, have trodden.

Let, then, the admonition be observed by all, “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding,” Prov. iii. 5.

Vocal supplication may be considered as belonging to the ministry. In this exercise, the minister becomes the mouth of the assembly. And, if addresses to the throne of grace which are *unfelt*, must necessarily be *unavailing*, how clear must be the necessity, in this case, of speaking only under the influence of the eternal Spirit! To address Almighty God, on behalf of an assembly, expressing *their* wants and *their* feelings, cannot be done without the Spirit of Jesus Christ, through whom alone there is access, and by whom alone we can have that feeling sense of the states of others, which is necessary in this most solemn exercise.

Our Lord, while personally on earth, adverted particularly to the subject of prayer. The zealous



professors of that day were in the practice of making *long prayers*. But our Lord admonished his disciples, to be not as the hypocrites, who used vain repetitions, and thought they should be heard for their much speaking. The specimen of prayer which he gave them, (it was a specimen, for he said, "*after this manner pray ye*",) was remarkable for its fulness and conciseness. How comprehensive, and yet how short and simple!

It is a fact, to which experience, as well as Scripture, will bear testimony, that those who are favoured with the nearest access to the throne of grace,—to whom the Divine Majesty becomes most clearly revealed, will feel the most awfulness, reverence, and self-abasement in these approaches. And, in this reverential awe, there will be no place for light or redundant expressions. The language will be full, solemn, and concise. And, while it will comport with the dignity and solemnity of the occasion, it will contain nothing for the sake of mere ornament.

He knows what we have need of before we ask, and therefore cannot need repetitions or explanations. Nor is it consistent with the nature of this solemn engagement—to be intermixed with exhortations to the people.

In looking back to the ministers of the gospel, in the primitive church, in the exercise of their gifts, both in preaching and in supplication, we shall find, in them, an encouraging and instructive example. There is no instance of their delivering premedi-

tated or written orations, either as sermons or prayers. They came not with excellency of speech, or human wisdom, declaring the great truths of the gospel. But they spoke as the Spirit gave them utterance, a reaching power and energy attending their ministry. And this same power is graciously permitted to attend the true ministers of the gospel to the present day. Nor is it exclusively confined to the ministers, whom it enables to speak with the demonstration of the Spirit, and power; but it is the crown and glory of the church in all ages. And I am well assured that it would be more abundantly afforded to the professors of the Christian name, if it were more believed in and sought after—if they would “believe in the light, and walk in it.” Many, very many pious minds, who now, with weary steps, tread the dull rounds of devotional exercises, planned by the wisdom, and performed in the will of man—who, leaning on these exercises, find not that comfort to which, at times, they ardently aspire, by looking to the Spirit and power of Christ, revealed in the heart, would indeed find “the place” they are in to be “shaken.” And, as they are brought to experience, in the language of another portion of Scripture, the removal of those things which can be shaken, they would find those things which cannot be shaken, to remain, Heb. xii. 27. “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever,” has promised a spiritual communion with those that love him, John xiv. 23. But, in order to experience these blessings, there must be faith



in his spiritual appearance. Were this faith more prevalent among the professors of his name, he would more abundantly reveal the operations of his power, and pour into their minds the comforts which flow from the inexhaustible fountain of his love. In our religious meetings, we should not, at once, enter on the solemn acts of devotion, without feeling his influence to prepare our minds, to approach him with acceptable offerings, that our "prayer might be set forth as incense before him, and the lifting up of our hands as the evening sacrifice." But, till this qualification is experienced, the most rational exercise, on these occasions, is, reverently to *wait* upon him. In this *waiting* state of mind, he is often pleased to clothe us with *humility*, under a sense of our weakness and entire dependance on him for all our comforts, and for the springing up, in the heart, of that animating influence, whereby a qualification is experienced for the various acts and exercises which are required in the church of Christ.

It is only in a deep sense of humility and dependance upon God, animated by a lively impression of his goodness, that we can be prepared to bow, and cast down every crown before him. And it is the immediate operation of his power alone, that can enable us truly to speak in his name, or to offer up to Him the tribute of reverent adoration and praise.

## CHAP. XI.

### OF BAPTISM.

THE Scriptures afford clear evidence, that the law was designed as a school-master to lead to Christ; and that “the divers washings and carnal ordinances” which it imposed were to continue only till the time of reformation, or the introduction of the new covenant dispensation.

It also appears that John’s ministry belonged to the typical and shadowy dispensation, designed to “prepare the way of the Lord,” to bear testimony that the time of his coming was at hand—to typify the purifying operations of his power, and, finally, to apply his testimony to the person of Jesus of Nazareth; for all these things were effected by that messenger and his ministration. As multitudes flocked to his preaching and baptism, he directed their attention to Christ; representing himself as his humble *forerunner*, whose baptism was to decrease, as a thing of course, and contra-distinguishing it from the *baptism* of Christ. “I indeed baptize you with water, unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear. *He shall baptize*



*you with the Holy Ghost and with fire."* This clear and pointed testimony was owned by our Lord, at his coming, by the same kind of assent that he gave to the law, by submitting to the rituals which accompanied it.

"Think not," said our Lord, "that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil," Matt. v. 17. And in fulfilling, he ended that typical dispensation in his own, which was of a pure and spiritual nature.

There was a peculiar propriety in this, for these typical rites and ceremonies being of divine appointment, their force or obligation lasted till the new covenant dispensation was completely introduced, which did not take place until the great sacrifice was completed. Here their *obligation* ended, but they were continued, in condescension, a considerable time, after their obligation had ceased.

It is very remarkable, that the peculiar rite\* which was considered the *seal* of the "former covenant" was abrogated, by the introduction of the new dispensation. Under the law, this rite was not to be dispensed with, but, on the contrary, its disuse was no less than a dereliction of the covenant itself, with the promises and blessings annexed to it. But, when it had accomplished its office, when the antitype had come, under the new dispensation, the apostle assured some who wished still to retain the ceremony, that if they conformed to the law in this respect, "Christ should profit

\* Circumcision.

them nothing," Gal. v. 2. Not that one ceremony had been instituted for another. For this, which was an outward rite, and made a seal of an outward covenant, pointed to an inward change of heart, as the *seal* of a spiritual covenant. And here were probably the grounds of the strong prohibition to the retention of this ceremony, as it would be a relinquishment of the spiritual dispensation to which it pointed, or a denial of the coming of the anti-type.

That this ceremony had a direct allusion to a change of heart, was understood even under the law. As may be seen by reference to Deut. x. 16, and xxx. 6, and Jer. iv. 4, and many other passages of Scripture.

Thus, the whole body of ceremonies under the law was designed to represent the coming of Christ and his spiritual dispensation. Many of them were practised after the ascension of our Lord, not of *necessity*, but of *condescension*. Even that seal of the old covenant, which was ultimately so positively prohibited, was allowed for a time by the apostle Paul, as well as others. In condescension to the weakness of the human mind, which cannot bear sudden transitions, but must be gradually enlightened and enlarged, these things were permitted or suffered for a time; but, in the language of John, they were to *decrease*, and, finally, to disappear.

All that has been said of the ceremonies of the law, in general, will apply to the ministration of John, for he was under the law, as well as the pro-



phets that had preceded him. "He was the voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord." His whole office was but preparatory to the coming of our Lord in the flesh, and he was to "decrease," as the dispensation of the gospel advanced to a complete establishment: thus giving place gradually, not ceasing entirely at once.

As John approached nearer to the gospel dispensation, in point of time, than any other prophet, so his testimony was more direct and pointed.

And, as our Lord acknowledged the testimony of the law, and applied it to himself, so he also acknowledged the testimony of John, than whom a greater prophet had not appeared. And, as he came to fulfil the law, so he also *fulfilled* the ministration of John. It may be particularly remarked, that, in speaking of the law, he said, he "came not to destroy, but to *fulfil* it." And this fulfilling evidently was, by introducing the spiritual realities to which it pointed, to end the types and shadows, with all the "*washings* and carnal ordinances, imposed till the time of reformation." And, as he used the word, "fulfil," as applied to the *law and the prophets*, so he used it as applied to John, and his baptism: "Suffer it to be so *now*, for thus it becometh us to *fulfil* all righteousness," Matt. iii. 15.

The Jews were in expectation of the promised Messiah: however erroneous their ideas might have been, respecting his character, still he was much desired. They had lost their power and

pre-eminence among the nations of the earth. They had been conquered and made tributary, by one nation after another, till their yoke had become grievous. They were informed by the ancient prophets, that a messenger would be sent before the Messiah, in the spirit and power of Elias. When John commenced his ministry, there was something singular and striking in his appearance. The prophecy represented him as the voice of one crying in the wilderness, saying, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a high way for our God," Isa. xl. 3. He commenced his ministry in the *wilderness* of Judea. His food, his clothing, his doctrine, and his baptism were all calculated to impress the minds of those who resorted to him with the idea that the important event was then at hand. His testimony on this head was clear; and, though his reproofs were severe, his message was gladly received. For we read in the evangelist, "Then went out unto him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins," Matt. iii. 5, 6. Submission to his baptism, I consider, was intended by those who did it, as an acknowledgment to his testimony. This testimony, however, was not complete, till he had applied it, personally, to our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus it was that John fulfilled his commission, and accomplished the very end for which he was sent, "to prepare the way of the Lord." When, therefore, our Lord commenced *his* ministry, it was seen fit, in infinite wisdom,



that he should own the testimony of John. This opened a door of easy access to discipleship with him. And those who had submitted to the baptism of John were thus introduced to the very threshold of profession with Christ, before they were aware of it; and, by this means, many of the strong prejudices that would have operated unfavourably on them were removed. But there is another consideration, of some importance, to a correct understanding of the subject. As the law was represented as a schoolmaster, to lead to Christ, Gal. iii. 24, so John and his ministry were designed to prepare the way of the Lord, Matt. iii. 3, and Isa. xl. 3. The object was the same, though the mode of expression was different. In point of authority, too, they may be placed on the same ground, for both were of divine appointment. And, as no *abrogation* of types and shadows took place till the crucifixion of Christ, so the observance of John's baptism, in common with the other rituals of that dispensation, was to be expected to continue till that important period. The obligations of the ceremonial law rested on the disciples of Jesus Christ, while he was personally with them, as fully as on the pious Jews, before his visible appearance. And our Lord not only observed the law himself, but encouraged the observance of it in others. The last supper which he took with his disciples was in conformity to the ceremonial law,—and he directed one whom he had healed to “shew himself to the priest, and offer the gifts” prescribed by the law. Indeed it

is generally admitted, that the law was fully in force, in all its parts, till our Lord exclaimed, "It is finished." And, as the dispensation, previous to this event, completely and fully embraced the baptism of John, it is not strange that this baptism was observed, with the other ceremonies of the time then present. To these causes we may ascribe the sanction which our Lord gave to his disciples, in using John's baptism. There was divine wisdom, as well as condescension in it. And, further, it served to shew the harmony that existed in all the divine dispensations. But our Lord, as if to guard against wrong conclusions, that might be formed from these proceedings, never used this baptism himself. And, in using the word *now*, when he applied to John to be baptized, he limited the use of it to *that* dispensation.

The reasons for this use of water-baptism among the disciples were not permanent. They applied only to *that* particular time, when the influence of John and his ministry was necessary to the introduction of Christianity among that people. It was also peculiarly to the Jews. For they, and not the Gentiles, were the subjects of John's baptism.

When, therefore, the new dispensation was come—so far as this baptism was a type and shadow of the spiritual baptism of Christ, it stood just on the same ground with the types and shadows of the law—that is, the substance remained—the types and shadows ceased, and passed away—at that same period, too, it had done its office, in



preparing the way of the Lord, and facilitating the introduction of the new dispensation. It only then remained for the strong attachment which had been formed to it, and by which, in part, it effected its office—to wear away. This required time, during which, in condescension, it was borne with, as were many of the abrogated ceremonies of the law. And this was the fulfilment of the prophecy of John himself, “He must increase, but I must decrease,” John iii. 30. For the decrease of attachment to this, as well as the other relics of the typical dispensation, was only to be expected through the increasing influence of the pure, living principle of divine life in the soul.

And thus it was, in the primitive church. It is evident that the apostles themselves were more or less under the influence of their education, and the attachments they had formed to institutions while they were in force. So powerful was this prejudice, that Peter needed a vision, to induce him to go to Cornelius. It was at that very time, that he *queried*, “can any forbid water, that these should not be baptized?” He spoke hesitatingly, and not as he did when preaching the doctrines of the gospel. He was, long after this, entangled with the ceremonies of the law, so that Paul withstood him to the face. But this misunderstanding did not relate to the great, fundamental doctrines of the gospel. And it only depended on the force with which the mind retained its hold on things originally of divine appointment, but which, in the change of dispensations, had become unessen-

tial, and even an incumbrance and hinderance.

The apostles, however, gradually rose above these things. First, they saw beyond the contracted views of their education, and embraced the Gentiles, as well as the Jews, in the effusions of gospel love. The question of circumcision soon claimed their attention, and was adjudged to have ceased, in point of obligation. Nor was baptism entirely passed over unnoticed. The apostle Paul, finding the attachment to this ceremony not giving way so fast as it should have done, let them know it was no part of his mission, and thanked God, that he had baptized only a few individuals—which appears to have been done a considerable time before the period at which he wrote. The apostle Peter, also, found it necessary to enforce, on the minds of those to whom he wrote, that saving baptism was not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 1 Pet. iii. 21.

The transfiguration of our Lord, on the mount, was a striking illustration of the several dispensations, their objects, and duration. It is recorded by the evangelists in the following words: “And, after six days, Jesus taketh Peter, and James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart. And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And behold there appeared unto them Moses and Elias, talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto



Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias." ("For he wist not what to say," Mark ix. 6.) "While he yet spake, behold a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud which said, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him. And, when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said, arise, and be not afraid. And, when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man save Jesus only. And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead," Matt. xvii. 5—10. The concluding charge had allusion to the completion of the vision, when Jesus, or his spiritual dispensation was to be left alone, and not till that time was it seasonable to impress its mystical application.

As he assumed that divine glory, as seen in his transfiguration, Moses and Elias were seen talking with him: for to him, thus glorified, they pointed, and bore testimony. And, as they still appeared—that active disciple, though a little bewildered in his ideas, wished to continue that state of things, and perpetuate it by building three tabernacles, one for Jesus, one for Moses, and one for Elias. But, while he yet spake, the error was corrected—"for a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice said, this is my beloved Son,

in whom I am well pleased, *hear ye Him.* And, when they had lifted up their eyes—they saw no man save *Jesus only.*” Moses and Elias were gone. They had done their office—and Jesus alone remained. Moses and Elias, who represented the law, and the baptism of John, had done their office, when the Son of man was risen again from the dead—and they passed away. How vain would it then be to attempt to go back to a state in which God was not all, and build tabernacles for those that must disappear !

And thus it is with many pious minds, since that day. They wish to tabernacle with Jesus—but they want also the company of Moses, and John the Baptist. They see that these have been honoured with the presence of the Master, in great glory ; and that access to him has been obtained through them ; but that instructive voice remains to be heard, “ This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, *hear ye Him.*” And he is to remain alone.

Here, Moses and Elias appeared together, talking with Jesus—which was verified, in the continuance of the law, and the introduction of John’s ministration, and both in their full force, at the same time ; after our Lord made his appearance. And, as Moses (or the law) disappeared, so did John, (or water baptism),—and Jesus and his spiritual dispensation remains alone.

That others, as well as Peter, should be unwilling to let Moses and Elias go, is not strange. The strong attachment that had been formed for the



law and the baptism of John, while they were in force, was not to be shaken off immediately, by those whose zeal was ardent. Hence, many of the rituals of that dispensation, were still practised by the disciples, and even the apostles themselves, after the ascension of our Lord. Nor were they without strong prejudices also, as already observed—There was much disputing in the council of the apostles and elders, before they could come to the conclusion, that circumcision and the other rituals of the law were not necessary. But as the power, life, and light of Christ, became fully introduced, not only did the types and shadows of the law, which pointed to him, cease, but those prejudices also gave way, “before the brightness of his coming.” First the intimation of those things was mild. The apostles and elders at Jerusalem, sent to the brethren in distant parts, this gentle intimation of their views. “It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things.” Acts xv. 28. And in the enumeration of particulars, they included no part of the ceremonial law, except the abstinence from meats offered to idols, from things strangled, and from blood. The question immediately brought before them, is not mentioned in this address to the Churches, which shews clearly, that they designed to apply this instruction and decision, to the ceremonial law generally.

After this, the apostles began to speak more pointedly on the subject. Paul brings into view, the weakness of the law; and not only that the

divers washings, (of which John's baptism was one,) and carnal ordinances, could not effect that important change, which constituted the new creature, but that they were imposed only till the time of reformation, or full introduction of the Gospel Dispensation. Heb. vii. 19, and ix. 9, 10. He also informed the believers, that as there was but "one Lord, and one Faith," so there was but "one Baptism." Eph. iv. 5. And John clearly acknowledged that *his* was not the baptism of Christ. Matt. iii. 11.

The apostle Peter, as already observed, took occasion, in speaking of saving baptism, to let the believers know, that it was not the putting away of the filth of the flesh.

But the apostle Paul went further—in relation to ceremonies. When he found the professors of Christianity, not easily weaned from these things, he told them in strong terms, that if they observed these, Christ would profit them nothing—and he thanked God that he had baptized only a small number whom he mentioned. Thus giving them to understand that their attachment to this ceremony was not chargeable to *him*. *Vide* Gal. v. 2.

Not only did he thus represent forms and ceremonies, in their own littleness and insignificancy, but he inculcated those important truths that were of indispensable necessity.

Those whoever experience Christ brought into dominion over all in them, must be brought into a likeness of his death. We cannot be made partakers of his resurrection, without first partaking also



of his death. "For if," said the apostles, "we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." Rom. vi. 5. "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death." Phil. iii. 10.

When the mother of Zebedee's children requested of our Lord, that her sons might sit, one on his right hand, and the other on his left, in his kingdom, he inquired if they were able to drink of the cup that he should drink of, and be baptized with the *baptism* that he was *baptized* with? Matt. xx. 21. And as the period of his crucifixion drew near, he said, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished?" Widely different was this baptism from immersion in water, or sprinkling. And thus also it is found by his true followers. Conformable to this, is the language of the apostle: "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized *into* his death? Therefore we are buried *with* him, by baptism, *into death*." Rom. vi. 3. He does not say *into water*, which is not even implied in the text. And to the Galatians, iii. 27, he says: "For as many of you as were baptized *into* Christ, have put on Christ." And this is very clearly to be distinguished from water baptism. In the administration of the latter, all that can be positively stated is, that they are baptized into the water, and have put on a name of religion. Not so of the baptism of Christ—that which he himself

was baptized with. All who experience it, are baptized *into* Christ—and put on his divine nature, “that like as he was raised up from the dead, by the glory of the Father, even so they also may walk in newness of life.” Rom. vi. 4.

The commission given by our Lord to his disciples, after his resurrection, has been considered as the authority for water baptism. “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in [or into] the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” To this charge he annexed the promise of his presence—“Lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”

Here it is specially to be noticed, that *water* is not mentioned in the text. And I consider it assuming too much, to introduce into it what our Lord himself did not. In the next place, *baptizing* being the present participle, refers to the same time with teaching. They are thus brought to occupy the same space of time, as a simultaneous act. *Teach, baptizing.* This was completely fulfilled, as Peter bore testimony. “As I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with *water*, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.” Here then, was a case, in the household of Cornelius, of a baptism of the Holy Ghost—and in the fulfilment of the commission of our Lord, *Teach, Baptizing.*



In regard to this important commission, it has been remarked by some writers, that the common translation has given countenance to a mistake of no ordinary magnitude. "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:" that the original is not *in*, but *into*, the *name*, which is frequently put for the power.

I shall not insist on this criticism; as either of these prepositions will support our doctrine. For the preposition *into*, is not absolutely necessary, to convey the idea, even of immersion in the element, into which the subject is baptized. For we read in Matthew the iii. 5, that the hearers of John, "were baptized of him *in* Jordan." And the apostle Paul used them both, in the same sense we contend for. "If any man be *in* Christ, he is a new creature." 2 Cor. v. 17. "As many as have been baptized *into* Christ, have put on Christ." Gal. iii. 27. So that whether we take *in* or *into*, there will be no forced construction, in applying either, to the *name*, used figuratively for the *power, influence, or Divine Nature*. Thus: "Let them that love thy *name*, be joyful in thee." Psalm v. 11. "The name of the God of Jacob defend thee." *ib.* xx. 1. "The name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it and is safe." Prov. xviii. 10. "By what *power* or by what *name* have ye done this?" Acts iv. 17. This question was put to Peter and John, respecting the miracle, in healing the impotent man. In reply, "Peter, being filled with the Holy Ghost," let them know, that it was "by the *name* of Jesus

Christ of Nazareth"—“even by *Him* doth this man stand here before you whole.” And in their united supplication, they said: “And now Lord”—“grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word; *by stretching forth thy hand to heal*; and that signs and wonders may be done by the *name* of thy holy child Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and spake the word of God with boldness.” *ib.* iv. 29, 30. “In his *name* shall the Gentiles trust.” Mat. xii. 21. “Many believed in his *name*,” (that is, in his divinity.) John ii. 23. “That believing ye might have life through his *name*.” *ib.* xx. 31. “But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. 1 Cor. v. 11.

It will not be denied, that the expressions, “In his *name*,” are sometimes used to signify, *under his authority*.

This, however, is not less a figurative mode of expression than the other; and I believe it is not more frequently used in the Scriptures. That the apostles had this authority, will readily be granted. But what is that to those who have not been endued with the power?—will that warrant any one who pleases, to use that sacred name? The seven sons of Sceva made such an experiment. *They* took the *name* in a very literal sense, but they wofully found that they were destitute of the



power and influence, with which the apostles were endued.

How then can it be supposed that dipping into water, or sprinkling, can be fulfilling the commission, to teach, baptizing, in, or *into the name*. The question is involved in difficulty, which cannot possibly be removed. It is no support to the doctrine to argue, that allowing *water baptism*, is making the commission easily practicable for men. It militates directly against it. For the disciples themselves were not qualified for this work, after all their experience, without the aid and presence of Him who has "all power in heaven and on earth." They were specially commanded to tarry at Jerusalem, till they were endued with power from on high. They did so—and thus endued, they taught, baptizing "*into*" "the power of an endless life." And this remains to be the commission, down to the present day. They are to teach, baptizing into that divine power—and they are also to tarry till they are themselves endued with power from on high. Then, and not till then, are they clothed with a baptizing ministry. And the promise remains to be fulfilled—for the divine presence still goes along with all his true ministers.

It will not be pretended that all are baptized with the Holy Ghost, that submit to the ceremony of water baptism; for some had submitted to it formerly, who had not so much as heard that there was a Holy Ghost. Acts xix. 2. From the manner in which the extent of John's ministry and baptism

is mentioned by the evangelist, it would seem to have been generally received among the Jews. For he says: "Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins." Matt. iii. 5. But the history does not warrant the belief, that the ministry of Christ, and his spiritual Baptism, were as extensively received by the same subjects. And it is very certain, that some have received the baptism of the Holy Ghost, who had not received that of water. Such was the case of Cornelius; and such has been the case with thousands since that day, who never have received the ceremony of water baptism.

No one can deny that the commission of the great apostle of the Gentiles, was as full as that of any of the apostles. For he says he was "not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles." And yet, when speaking with reference to water baptism, he expressly declares he was not sent to baptize, but to preach the Gospel; and thanked God that he had baptized only such and such, whom he named. To suppose that he preached, and some other person baptized, would be but begging the question: for the Scriptures do not warrant the assertion. Not only is it without support from Scripture, but it would contradict his own assertion, that he was not a whit behind the chiefest apostles. Neither would it fulfil the commission; for teaching and baptizing are so intimately connected, both as to time and operation, that they are not to be separated, so as to



be assigned to different persons. Allowing this latitude of construction, the apostle Paul, could not teach, Baptizing; he only taught—and so but half fulfilled the commission—and then unaccountably thanked God that it had been so! These suppositions lead to conclusions, which will not readily be admitted, by the pious Christian, whatever denomination he may be of.

“He that believes and is baptized, shall be saved.” This is a very positive, unequivocal declaration. Here the case is not left doubtful, but to believe, and be baptized, is saving. And yet, we must admit that the very worst of men, may, like “the devils, believe;” and none can deny that they may be baptized with water, for we read that the devils believe and tremble, James ii. 19: and Simon Magus was baptized in water. Acts viii. 13. Therefore the baptism here meant, could not be that of water, or “a putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” 1 Pet. iii. 21.

The baptism of *water* was a metaphor; and, as it was, in its first institution, connected with the call to repentance, so it represented the first tendering impressions of divine grace; softening the obdurate heart into contrition, and, at the same time, cleansing it from a portion of its pollutions.

But, as these first operations are represented metaphorically as effected by *water*, so the further purification of the soul is represented as being through the operation of *fire*. But, in the Chris-

tian experience, the first is no more by *material water*, than the last is by *material fire*. "The washing of water" is, "by the word," Eph. v. 26. And this is as purely a spiritual operation, as that of "the refiner's fire," by which "the dross, the tin, and the reprobate silver are consumed."

The types and shadows of the legal dispensation were not abrogated, to be succeeded by other shadows, equally outward and figurative with the first. They were not shadows of shadows—but pointed to the living and eternal substance.

The apostle bore testimony, "We have not received the spirit of bondage, again to fear, but we have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father; the Spirit itself bearing witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God," Rom. viii. 15. "Ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise," Eph. i. 13. "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, wherewith ye were sealed, to the day of redemption," Eph. iv. 30. Thus, it is by the Holy Spirit that we are sealed under the gospel—and not by water.

The Society of Friends, therefore, believe that the baptism of John was a *type*, that has long since done its office, and ceased, in the church of Christ. That it was used for a time, and on particular occasions, in the primitive church, will be readily granted. But this is no more than may be said of some other ceremonies of the law. Long after the ascension of our Lord, there were many thousands of the believers who were zealous for the law, Acts xxi. 20., and could not see that they were



entering into a dispensation purely spiritual, in which the substance of things being enjoyed, those types and shadows ceased. And this weakness was yielded to by the apostles, for, on the occasion alluded to in Acts xxi., the great council of elders, and James recommended the apostle Paul to join with four men that had a vow, and were about purifying themselves according to the law, and shave their heads; that all might know that he walked orderly, and kept the law.

There was the same reason to account for the continuance of water baptism. There were those who held the ministry and baptism of John in high estimation, firmly believing them to have been of God, as they really were, as well as the law. To such attachments to things once necessary, although it might be in weakness, as not properly distinguishing the right time when they were to cease, there has always been great tenderness and condescension in the church of Christ. And we freely agree that this tenderness is still extended to those who sincerely believe in the necessity of these outward ceremonies, though about eighteen hundred years have passed over, since Jesus Christ put an end to types and shadows, "blotting out the hand-writing of *ordinances*, that was against us, which was contrary to us—and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross."

And seeing this strong attachment, in pious minds, after the lapse of so many ages, we can form some idea of the effects of the same thing, when the causes were all recent, and the nature of the

gospel dispensation had hardly been clearly unfolded.

We see that the apostles and elders were as nursing-fathers in the church, not willing that any should stumble, or be wounded, or offended; regarding, above all things, the *sincerity* with which the new converts were actuated. Thus Paul declared he would rather eat no meat, than to offend a weak brother. We find him also conforming to rituals that were perfectly unessential, merely in condescension to the same weakness.

But, though this weakness was, and still remains to be, regarded with tenderness, yet it deserves to be seriously considered, that *weakness* is not a situation to be desired or continued in.

The apostle admonished the Galatians, to “stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.” And he testified, that, if one of the rituals of the law, which he mentioned, was observed, they were debtors to do the whole law. Let it be a serious consideration, in contending for the continuance of types and shadows, which have had their fulfilment in Christ, how far such individuals are entangling themselves with the yoke of bondage, and becoming debtors to the whole ceremonial institutions of the former dispensation, and even detracting from the excellencies of the new dispensation which was introduced by Jesus Christ.

The baptism of the Holy Ghost, or Christ’s spiritual baptism, is still continued to the true



believers: for the apostle Paul declared, "There is one Lord, one faith, and one baptism." And the apostle Peter, in speaking of saving baptism, says, "Which is not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." These testimonies, were there no others in the Scriptures, are sufficient to prove that it is no elementary operation; and that it is of a lasting, unchangeable nature. The ministers whom Christ sends are still enabled to teach, baptizing: and, when that baptism is experienced, there is no doubt remaining of its sufficiency. The substance is enjoyed, and we dare not turn from it, to embrace *shadows*.

## CHAP. XII.

### OF THE SUPPER.

WHEN our Lord first spoke to his disciples, of their eating his flesh and drinking his blood, it was heard with astonishment, and the exclamation, "How can these things be!" Their views were then outward, and they construed his words *literally*, when their meaning was altogether mystical. This has been the case, in relation to the flesh and blood of Christ, from the day that he first mentioned it, down to the present period.

Thus some, taking the words of our Lord in the most literal signification, "This is my body," &c. and "this is my blood of the New Testament," &c. and "this do in remembrance of me," have supposed that they were authorized to repeat this ceremony, and that the bread and wine became the very flesh and blood of Christ. Others, revolting at these gross conceptions, have variously modified their opinions, until they have brought it down to "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace." And even thus modified, it is contended for, as a standing ordinance in the church of Christ.



That we may examine how far this idea is supported by the text, I will transcribe the several relations that are given of that transaction, by the four evangelists.

Matthew says, "And, as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, take, eat: this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, drink ye all of it. For this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you, in my Father's kingdom."

Mark's account is almost exactly in the words of Matthew.

Luke says, "And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, this is my body, which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, this cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you."

John passes over the supper, and proceeds to another transaction, thus: "Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come, that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own, which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. And supper being ended, (the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him), Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come

from God, and went to God; he riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments, and took a towel, and girded himself; after that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash his disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet! Jesus answered, and said unto him, what I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter saith unto him, thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, if I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. Jesus saith unto him, he that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit; and ye are clean, but not all. For he knew who should betray him: therefore said he, ye are not all clean. So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I, then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you."

Of the four evangelists, who have recorded the passover that Jesus eat with his disciples, immediately before he suffered, only one says any thing *like* its being repeated. Can we suppose that, if it was designed as so important an institution, as is believed by some, that it would have been thus



slightly passed over? Would the institution have been entirely omitted by three out of the four evangelists, and by the fourth just mentioned, in the simple expression, "this do in remembrance of me?"

A question naturally arises, whether the breaking of bread for the common support of nature, and taking the cup, with the giving of thanks, is not the thing that is to be done in remembrance of Christ. And whether, as often as this is done—as often as we sit down to our ordinary meals, under a reverent sense of the goodness of God, through Jesus Christ, there is not a memorial of his body that was broken, and his blood that was shed for us? agreeably to the words of the apostle, "*as often as ye do this, ye do show forth the Lord's death till he come.*"

When, partaking of the blessings of a bountiful providence for the nourishment and growth of our natural bodies, does it not bring to mind the need there is, for the preservation of the divine life in us, of the bread which comes down from heaven, for the support of the inner man? And, as this bread is obtained through the coming and suffering of Jesus Christ, whose precious blood was shed for us, it is calculated to make impressions of an humbling nature. It is Christ alone, internally enjoyed, that can nourish the soul up unto eternal life; and hence that mysterious expression of our Lord, "except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you, for my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed."

This, however repugnant in a literal point of view, is one of those precious truths, which the pious soul well understands, and often recurs to, in its progress heaven-ward.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke all give the circumstances of the breaking of bread, taking the cup, and giving of thanks. But this was no more than appears to have been our Lord's uniform practice. When he ate, he took the bread, and, looking up to heaven, gave thanks, and brake it, and gave to his disciples. This is so often recorded, that we may fairly conclude, that it was his constant practice.

At this last supper that he was to take with his disciples, in order to inculcate the great truths of redemption, and the benefits derived from his sufferings and death, then soon to take place, he associated that sacrifice of himself on the cross, with the idea of the nourishment of their bodies. And the calls for food being of a nature so often to occur, and so absolute in its demands, was calculated to fix deeply in their minds the necessity of that spiritual bread, which they received through him, who was about to lay down his life, and shed his precious blood for them. Thus far the three evangelists concur; the third adds, "do this in remembrance of me," which does not materially change the view of the subject. The fourth had his attention directed to another circumstance, which the others had not mentioned, the washing of the disciples' feet. And here let the two accounts of the evangelists, Luke, and John, be com-



pared, and candidly decide, which has most the appearance of a permanent institution, the Supper, or the washing of feet? I hesitate not to say, that the latter has abundantly more of such an appearance, than the former. And yet, by general consent of Christians, it is laid aside, or rather not regarded as a standing ordinance.

I am not endeavouring to detect discrepancies among the evangelists, but only to show, that though four have written on the occasion, so little is to be discovered in the records they have left, like an institution of an ordinance. And this may be regarded as an evidence, that it was not so intended.

That such a ceremony did take place in the Christian church, in early times, is no more than happened in relation to many practices and observances, which are now generally considered to have ceased, in point of obligation—even though they were enjoined by the church. Such were those relics of the ceremonial law, which were enjoined in the epistle of the apostles and elders at Jerusalem—though they introduced it by saying, it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to them. And such was the washing of feet; the practice of which, to some extent, grew out of the example of our Lord, as recorded by the evangelist. John xiii. Such also was the anointing of the sick with oil, as enjoined by the apostle. James v. 14. And we might mention, their having all things in common—in very close connexion with which, was the practice of “breaking bread, from house to house.” Acts ii. 46.

We therefore believe, that we may safely decline the use of this ceremony, as not essential in itself. That the bread and wine, are not the actual flesh and blood of Christ, is agreed by all Protestants. And if it be admitted, as an outward and visible sign, of an inward and spiritual grace, it must be perfectly useless if that spiritual grace be wanting: and if it be present, and the body and blood of Christ be really enjoyed in spirit, that outward and visible sign must be of small consequence, and would be lost in the fulness of the eternal substance.

On the other hand, there is a real danger, that a dependance on an empty shadow, may divert the mind of the pious Christian, from perseveringly seeking the substance. Hence the admonition of the apostle: "Wherefore, if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; which all are to perish with the using,) after the commandments and doctrines of men?" Col. ii. 20—22.

The idea of establishing certain particular days, at long intervals, for enjoying communion with God, I apprehend, is calculated to produce effects prejudicial to the Christian traveller. That communion which is the life of the true Christian, should be more frequent. "Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me." Rev. iii. 20. That this is properly the Lord's Supper, is clear from



the plain language of the text. And that it is not dependant on any ceremonies whatever, is equally evident. That this intercourse and sustenance should be daily sought after, is inculcated by our Lord, in that prayer which he taught his disciples: "Give us day by day our daily bread." Luke xi. 3. Here is no putting off to *sacrament day*,\* so called: the soul, in the mean time, languishing for the want of that bread, which alone can nourish it up to eternal life.

We, therefore, believing that the body and blood of Jesus Christ, and communion with God through him, are only to be experienced in a spiritual sense, and that the outward ceremony is one of those things which perish with the using, think ourselves fully warranted in declining the use of the shadow, and pressing after the pure and spiritual substance, which is the one thing needful.

\* The word SACRAMENT, is of Roman origin, and signified a military oath.

## CHAP. XIII.

### OF DAYS AND TIMES.

THE Society of Friends believe, that the "holy days," "the new moons," and "sabbath days," observed under the law, "were *shadows* of things to come, but the body is of Christ." Col. ii. 16, 17. And as shadows, they ceased, with the shadowy dispensation, of which they formed a part.

The apostle, speaking of Christ, and the blessed operations of his power, under the Gospel dispensation, brings into view the abrogation of the types and shadows of the law, by the coming of the spiritual realities to which they pointed, in the following striking language: "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances, that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath-days; which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ."

"Wherefore, if ye be dead with Christ, from



the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (touch not; taste not; handle not; which all are to perish with the using,) after the commandments and doctrines of men?" Col. ii. 14—17, 20.

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." *ib.* iii. 1.

An improper veneration of days, and other shadows of the legal dispensation, appears to have been a snare, into which professing Christians, were very early betrayed. Indeed, where there is a large proportion of zeal, there is peculiar danger of its being directed to wrong objects. Not only did the Colossians give cause to the apostle, to check their superstitious observance of days and times, but the Galatians appear to have been not less entangled in these things than the Colossians. The great and dangerous error, into which they have been led by the observance of these things, was an apprehension that they were justified by the works of the law; and this remains to be the danger, to the present day. There were various stages, before the observance of days assumed this dangerous character. There were those among the Romans who esteemed one day above another, and others esteemed every day alike: "He that regarded the day, regarded it to the Lord: and he that regarded not the day, to the Lord he did not regard it." Rom. xiv. 5, 6. In these cases, on account of the religious sincerity with which each was actuated, and the limits to which the obser-

vances were confined, the apostle did not censure either. But with the Galatians and some other churches, the case was different; and the apostle was brought strongly to reprehend their defection from the spirituality of the New Dispensation. "Oh! foolish Galatians," was his language, "who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth?" "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of Faith?" "Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye made perfect by the flesh." Gal. iii. 1—3. "But now, after ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe *days*, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain." *ib.* iv. 9, 10.

Thus it appears, that even in the days of the apostles, there were those among professing Christians, whose veneration for days and times had diverted their attention from the true objects they were originally set apart to typify. And thus, by a zealous observance of types, after their office had ceased, they were entangling themselves with the yoke of bondage, and endangering their total ruin as to the life of Christianity.

The state to which the outward Sabbath pointed, was so different from that in which the Galatians rested in its observance, that the solicitude of the apostle was very powerfully excited on the occasion. It pointed to a state in which the activity of



the creature was brought into quiet. A state in which the soul, after accomplishing that portion of labour assigned it, comes to know a ceasing from its "own works, as God did from his." This exposition is clearly given by the apostle to the Hebrews, in the 3d and 4th chapters. To the Hebrews this exposition was peculiarly proper, because to them the outward Sabbath had been given; and when the anti-type had come, or that dispensation in which it was to be more particularly experienced, it was the divine will that its mystical application should be explained—"There is, then," said the apostle, "a rest to the people of God." And again, "He that hath entered into his rest hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his." And he admonishes the Hebrew believers to enter into that rest. Leaving those things that were behind, among which was this shadow of good things to come, they were to enter into that pure and spiritual rest, which was the very thing to which the outward figure pointed. And to go back to an observance of the outward form, seemed to be an indication that the reality had not come, and very naturally tended to cause it to be lost sight of. Thus, as a Jewish rite, its obligation ceased, and its observance became dangerous. According to the reasoning of the apostle, to insist on the observance of one particular of the ceremonial law, is to become a debtor to the whole law, and, of course, virtually to deny the coming of Christ—for, as these figures pointed to him and his spiritual dispensation, and were to continue only till his coming, to insist on

their continuance, is to deny that He had come.

And, as it is evident that the Sabbath was a shadow of something to come, for the apostle expressly declares it was, the reasoning which he applies to other shadows will apply to that also.

I know that the observance of the Sabbath is considered, by some, to be a part of the moral law; and, of course, to be of perpetual obligation. But the apostle, both to the Galatians and to the Hebrews, gives it another character, for he clearly makes it a shadow, and, of course, to cease when other shadows ceased, Heb. iv. 4, 10, 11.

“Let no man, therefore, judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moons, or of the Sabbath *days*; which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ,” Col. ii. 16, 17. This single passage alone is sufficient to establish the position that the particulars enumerated were parts of the ceremonial law, and not of perpetual obligation.

All that has been said on this subject is intended to apply to the Jewish Sabbath, or an observance of a portion of the ancient ceremonial law, on principles not warranted under the gospel dispensation.

And here the Society of Friends have always stopped. As a society, we have never objected to a day of rest: of relaxation from the business and cares of life, for the purpose of religious improvement. We know that the spirit of the world is apt to acquire an undue ascendancy over our affections, and, were the ordinary business of life to



engage our attention in an uninterrupted train of occupation, the consequences would be extremely prejudicial to religious improvement and enjoyment. And, as the mind requires abstraction, so the body requires relaxation—we require it for ourselves—we should observe it for those who have to perform the menial and laborious services for us; it is due, also, to the brute creation under our control. A day of rest, when, by common consent, the business of the world is suspended, is peculiarly favourable to the important object of social worship—without which religious society would lack one of those connecting bonds by which it is held together.

For these, and other reasons which might be assigned, we freely concur in setting apart the first day of the week, as a day of rest and relaxation, to be devoted to public worship and religious improvement; without a superstitious veneration of one day above another, or supposing there is any inherent holiness in it.

Nor do we think it proper to call it the Lord's day. Every day is, alike his. And every day we are alike bound to be in a state of watchfulness unto prayer—to love, honour, and obey him.

I shall conclude by extracting from the writings of our Friends, at different periods, what the society has believed and practised in relation to this subject.

“We, not seeing any ground in Scripture for it, cannot be so superstitious as to believe, that either the Jewish Sabbath now continues, or that the

first day of the week is the anti-type thereof, or the true Christian Sabbath : which, with Calvin, we believe to have a more spiritual sense ; and, therefore, we know no *moral obligation* by the *fourth command*, or elsewhere, to keep the first day of the week more than any other, or any inherent holiness in it. But, *first*, forasmuch as it is most necessary that there be some time set apart for the saints to meet together to wait upon God ; and, *secondly*, it is fit at some times that they be freed from their outward affairs ; and, *thirdly*, reason and equity do allow, that servants and beasts have some time allowed them to be eased from their continual labour ; and, *fourthly*, it appears that the apostles and primitive Christians did use the first day of the week for these purposes ; we find ourselves sufficiently moved, for these causes, to do so also, without superstitiously straining the Scriptures for another reason ; which, that it is not there to be found, many Protestants, yea, Calvin himself, upon the fourth Command, hath abundantly evinced. And, though we, therefore, meet, and abstain from *working* on this *day*, yet doth not that hinder us from having meetings, also, for worship, at other times,” (*Barclay’s Apology*, Prop. 11, § 4.)

“ We, however, consider the setting apart of one day in seven for cessation from business, and for religious services, no more than a reasonable duty ; and we encourage the observance of it among our members. It has been our practice from the commencement of our religious society ; and, although we do not consider the first, or any day of the



week, as possessing a superior degree of holiness ; yet we believe considerable advantages to religion and virtue arise, not only from a proper dedication and employment of it, but even from the imperfect observance with which it is, on the whole, regarded," (*Tuke's Principles*, London Ed. p. 132.)

"But, as I have before observed, I am satisfied there is no particular holiness attached to one day more than another ; yet, if we were to lay aside the practice of setting apart one day in seven, no doubt the cause of religion would suffer by it. The society, therefore, although they do not believe that one day has any sacred preference to another, have never departed from the practice of other professors, in regard to the first day of the week," (*Kersey's Treatise*, p. 72.)

"In turning our attention to the state of the Society, as it has been now laid before us, the proper employment of the first day of the week, the day more particularly set apart for public worship, is a subject that has claimed our serious attention. It is no small privilege to be living in a country where much regard is paid to this duty, and it highly becomes us to be careful that our example, in this respect, be consistent with the profession we make to the world. We desire that heads of families, and our younger Friends also, may closely examine whether they are sufficiently solicitous to improve that portion of this day which is not allotted to the great duty of meeting with their friends, for the purpose of divine worship. To those who are awakened to a due sense of the

eternal interests of the soul—and, O ! that this were the case with all—we believe that these intervals have often proved times of much religious benefit. Many have derived great increase of strength, both at these and other times, from retiring to wait upon the Lord ; from reading the Holy Scriptures, with minds turned to their divine Author, in desire that he would bless them to their comfort and edification ; and from perusing the pious lives and experiences of those who have gone before them. But we avoid prescribing any precise line of conduct, believing that, if the attention be sincerely turned unto the heavenly Shepherd, his preserving help and guidance will not be withheld,” (*London Epistle*, 1817.)

The following extract of a Letter of advice, from a meeting of the representatives of the Society, held in London, in the year 1751, will explain our reasons for giving the months and days of the week their proper, *numerical* names, instead of those by which they are commonly called.

“ *A brief account of the origin of the names of some months of the year, and of all the days of the week, now customarily and commonly used.*

“ I. January was so called from Janus, an ancient King of Italy, whom heathenish superstition had deified, to whom a temple was built, and this month dedicated.

II. February was so called from Februa, a word denoting purgation by sacrifices ; it being usual, in



this month, for the priests of the Heathen god Pan, to offer sacrifices, and perform certain rites; conducting, as was supposed, to the cleansing or purgation of the people.

III. March was so denominated from Mars, feigned to be the god of war, whom Romulus, founder of the Roman Empire, pretended to be his father.

IV. April is generally supposed to derive its name from the Greek appellation of Venus, an imaginary goddess, worshipped also by the Romans.

V. May is said to have been so called from Maia, the mother of Mercury, another of their pretended ethnic deities, to whom, in this month, they paid their devotions.

VI. June is said to take its name from Juno, one of the supposed goddesses of the Heathen.

VII. July, so called from Julius Cæsar, one of the Roman Emperors, who gave his own name to this month, which before was called Quintilis, or the Fifth.

VIII. August, so named in honour of Augustus Cæsar, another of the Roman Emperors. This month was before called Sextilis, or the Sixth.\*

The other four months, namely, September, October, November, and December, still retain their numerical Latin names: which, according to the late regulation of the calender, will, for the future, be improperly applied. However, from the continued use of them hitherto, as well as from

\* Macrob. Saturn. lib. 1. cap. 12.

the practice of the Jews before the Babylonish captivity,\* it seemeth highly probable, that the method of distinguishing the months by their numerical order only, was the most ancient, as it is the most plain, simple, and rational.

As the idolatrous Romans thus gave names to several of the months, in honour of their pretended deities; so, the like idolatry prevailing among our Saxon ancestors, induced them to call the days of the week by the name of the idol which, on that day, they peculiarly worshipped. Hence,

The First day of the week was by them called Sunday, from their customary adoration of the Sun, upon that day.

The Second day of the week they called Monday, from their usual custom of worshipping the Moon on that day.

The Third day of the week they named Tuesday, in honour of one of their idols called Tuisco.

The Fourth day of the week was called Wednesday, from the appellation of Woden, another of their idols.

The Fifth day of the week was called Thursday, from the name of an idol called Thor, to whom they paid their devotions upon that day.

The Sixth day of the week was termed Friday, from the name of Friga, an imaginary goddess, by them worshipped.

The Seventh day they styled Saturday, as is supposed, from Saturn, or Seater, by them then worshipped.†

\* See the Scriptures to the time of Ezra.

† See Verstegan and Sheringham.



In the ages of popish superstition, not only the use of such heathenish names and customs was indulged, but also other unsound and unscriptural practices in religion were invented and introduced. For, when the profession of the Christian religion became national, multitudes of the Heathen priests, whose interest lay in the performance of rites, ceremonies, and sacrifices, embraced prevailing Christianity with selfish views; and laboured early, with too much success, to find employment for themselves, by imposing on the people a new set of ceremonies and sacrifices, bearing some resemblance to those which, in their former state of Heathenism, they had been accustomed to. From this corrupt source sprang the popish sacrifice of the Mass, the celebration of which, at particular times, and on particular occasions, gave rise to the vulgar names of Michaelmas, Martinmas, Christmas, and the like.

Seeing, therefore, that these appellations and names of days, months, and times are of an idolatrous or superstitious original, contrary to the divine command, the practice of good and holy men in former ages, and repugnant to the Christian testimony borne by our faithful friends and predecessors in the truth, for the sake of which they patiently endured many revilings: let neither the reproach of singularity, nor the specious reasonings of such as would evade the cross of Christ, turn you aside from the simplicity of the gospel; nor discourage you from keeping to the language of truth, in denominating the months and days according to

the plain and scriptural way of expression : thereby following the example of our worthy elders, and coming up in a noble and honourable testimony against these, and all other remains of idolatry and superstition.

From the Meeting for Sufferings in London.

the sixth day of the Seventh Month, 1751.



## CHAP. XIV.

### OF SALUTATIONS AND RECREATIONS.

FROM the first rise of the Society to the present time, one uniform sentiment has prevailed in relation to salutations and recreations. About the commencement of the Christian era, pride and presumption, seemed to have attained their very summit at Rome, then the mistress of the world, and the pattern of what the world denominated fashionable, elegant or great: sunk too in the depth of pagan darkness, they did not hesitate to ascribe divine honours to those individuals who attained to the pinnacle of power—inferior orders imitated the example, and followed behind as near as they could venture to approach the highest characters. Only a few centuries passed over the Christian church, before Constantine adopted the profession of Christianity, when, of course, the profession became fashionable among the higher orders of society. As many embraced it for the sake of fashion, as well as for other motives even worse, so fashion pervaded the manners of professed Christians.

The injunction of the apostle was now but little

regarded: "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds." On the contrary, that great empire with all its grandeur, power, and policy, now asked admission into the visible church—which, cheated by the smiles of power, stooped to the low degradation of admitting the applicant. A degradation indeed it was: for she ceased to be "the Bride, the Lamb's wife." She ceased to appear in that transcendant glory, described as, "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners." Cant. vi. 10. And instead of this glory—she took on herself the paltry trappings of an earthly empire, and added to these, the pollutions of pagan superstition.

Extravagant honours, from being paid to emperors and other usurpers of power, by the prevalence of pride, became grateful to every inferior grade, and freely bestowed on all.

Hence the fashionable appellation of *you*, to a single person: it being thought, by minds inflated with pride, to be too little to be regarded as a single individual—the idea of plurality must be conveyed.

Bowing, which had been practiced in earlier times, was still recognized, and had the uncovering of the head, (another act of worship,) connected with it.

From these corrupt sources, proceeded those salutations, which make up the complimentary intercourse of fashionable life.

And as they originated in pride, and other depraved passions of the human heart, so, the Society of Friends believe they have a powerful



tendency, to become, reciprocally, both causes and effects: and consequently laid them aside.

They believe there is no propriety in bowing the body, and uncovering the head, to any created beings; for worship belongs to God only. But if we are told, that in fashionable life, these actions have no such intention, we reply, that if they have become unmeaning, men of correct feelings ought neither to offer nor receive them. If they are intended only to express civility and ordinary respect, we say, that these can be expressed in a more appropriate manner, than by degrading the outward acts of divine worship, down to a mere expression of common civility, or even nothing at all. Every thing which relates to divine worship, or that homage we pay to the Almighty, should be carefully guarded from being introduced into the familiar intercourse between man and man; lest by the association of ideas, our worship itself become adulterated and offensive.

We believe that under the Gospel, we are bound to speak every man truth to his neighbour. The expressions, mister, or master, and your most obedient, &c. your humble servant, &c. being in the common application untrue, we decline to use. The love and charity which the Gospel inspires, are above all complimentary expressions, and need neither flattery nor falsehood to set them off to advantage.

However the censorious may charge the Society with singularity, and with attaching unreal consequence to little things, the history of early times

affords abundant evidence, that these compliments were not understood at that day, as empty sounds. Often have men of high standing, and even some of an opposite class, been so enraged at not receiving these pitiful compliments, as to set no bounds to their resentment. Even the simple expression of *Thou*, to one person, was considered an indignity not to be borne; and many a man of fair and elevated character, has had his blood shed in profusion, for no higher offence, than the use of this simple, and correct language.

The plain language, as we term it, or the use of the singular pronouns to a single person, has much to recommend it. In the first place, it is consonant to truth: for the plural pronoun does express a plurality of persons to whom it relates; hence we consider it a departure from *truth*, to address a single individual with a word that conveys an idea of more than one. We consider it, too, as the language of the greatest and best of men that have ever lived, to one another and to God. And we think this authority ought to possess great weight. The rules of the language contribute something to the same effect. It must be admitted that the beauty and precision of the language, are greatly injured by the promiscuous use of the plural pronouns.

But we shall be told that we do not use the pronouns grammatically. I admit the truth of the charge, and admit also that it is a great defect in *our* language. But this is a colloquial liberty taken—improperly so, I confess; but it is not universal



among the Society. So far as this grammatical error prevails, it destroys the beauty and dignity of our language, but it does not affect the principle. It does not touch the argument that rests on the *truth* of the expression, nor does it destroy the *precision* of the language. The idea it conveys is still the singular number. It is not the false, flattering attempt, to magnify one individual into a great many. The primary grounds for this deviation from the plural language, remain the same. I candidly acknowledge, however, that we *ought* to use the singular pronouns grammatically.

Those vain amusements, which have been denominated recreations, we consider beneath the dignity of the Christian character; and they frequently prove the inlet to much vice and corruption.

H. Tuke, in his "Principles of Religion," chap. 9, says: "There are three rules relating to amusements, by which our conduct should be regulated.

1.—To avoid all those which tend needlessly to oppress and injure any part of the animal creation. Of this class are cock-fighting and horse-racing: also hunting, &c. when engaged in for diversion and pleasure.

2.—To abstain from such as are connected with a spirit of hazardous enterprise; by which the property and temporal happiness of individuals and families, are often made to depend on the most precarious circumstances; and the gain of one, frequently entails misery on many. Of this class are all games in which property is staked.\*

\* GAMES are prohibited by the society, whether property be staked or not.

3.—To avoid such as expose us to unnecessary temptations, with respect to our virtue; or, which dissipate the mind, so as to render a return to civil and religious duties ungrateful. Of this kind, stage entertainments are peculiarly to be avoided, with various other places of public amusement, which have a tendency to corrupt the heart, or to alienate it from the love and fear of God.”

The two first species of amusements, mentioned in the first description, are so generally acknowledged by the different religious societies, to be immoral, and even reproachful, that it seem unnecessary to say much, to prove their inconsistency with the Christian character.

The practice of *hunting*, however, does not appear to have excited so much attention, or drawn forth such a concurrent sentiment against it.

So far as this practice is pursued for amusement, it cannot bear the test of cool examination. The brute creation, however we may be elevated above them—have *their rights*, as well as we. He who created *us*, endued us with exalted faculties and capacities, for superior enjoyments, created *them* also, and gave them the capacities of enjoyment which they possess. And though he has given us power over them, that our wants might be supplied, and our happiness promoted, he never could have designed that they should be sacrificed to our depraved passions.

There certainly is something very revolting to our best feelings, to think of deriving amusement and gratification, from the agonies and death of



animated beings. And though this idea may be disclaimed, yet it is extremely difficult to divest the amusement of hunting of this character.

There are many circumstances connected with it, which have a powerful and fascinating effect on the youthful mind; but cruelty—and a violation of the rights of the animal creation are inseparably connected with it.

“ We clearly rank the practice of hunting and shooting for diversion, with vain sports; and we believe the awakened mind may see, that even the leisure of those whom Providence hath permitted to have a competence of worldly goods, is but ill filled up with these amusements. Therefore being not only accountable for our substance, but also for our time, let our leisure be employed in serving our neighbour, and not in distressing the creatures of God for our amusement.”\* (*London Book of Extracts, page 25.*)

\* Cruelty to the brute creation, though not in connexion with motives of amusement, is clearly incompatible with Christian feelings. Several cases have recently occurred in the United States in which cruelty to brutes has been adjudged to be violations of the civil law. It must be ever revolting to the benevolent mind, to see animals which are employed in our service, and contribute to our comfort and advantage, made the victims of passion, of avarice, or of wanton cruelty.

“ A man of kindness to his beast is kind;  
But brutal actions show a brutal mind.  
Remember he, who made thee, made the brute;  
Who gave thee speech and reason, formed him mute;  
He can't complain; but God's omniscient eye  
Beholds thy cruelty; he hears his cry.  
He was designed thy servant and thy drudge;  
But know that HIS Creator is THY Judge.”

The demoralizing effects of gaming, are so generally admitted by the various denominations of Christians, that it will not be necessary to say much in proof of its pernicious tendency.

The beginnings of vice are often clothed with specious pretences; and imaginary barriers are set up against unrestrained indulgence; but these very restrictions, which the adventurers in dissipation propose to themselves, increase the danger. For by this delusive idea, they are armed against the dread of consequences, until the taste for such indulgences becomes not only confirmed, but too powerful for their resolutions: and thus they become the victims of an ungovernable infatuation.

How many of those miserable beings who crowd our penitentiaries, and furnish the awful spectacles of public executions, date the commencement of their wicked and unhappy career, at the period when they first sat down as partners at the gaming table!

The pernicious consequences of gaming have been frequently described in the strongest terms, and illustrated by the most striking examples.

“ Seldom however, have they been presented on so large a scale, as in a late account of the fate of *a great body of Gamesters* at Hamburgh, which an intelligent spectator has published in a German gazette, as the result of his attentive examination, during a period of two years. Of six hundred individuals, who were in the habit of frequenting gaming houses, he states that nearly one-half, not only lost considerable sums, but were finally stript



of all means of subsistence, and ended their days by self-murder. Of the rest, not less than a hundred finished their career by becoming swindlers or robbers on the highway. The remnant of this unfortunate group perished: some by apoplexy: but the greater part by chagrin and despair."

"The amusements of dancing and music we think, also come within this class. It may be alleged, that these might be practiced in such a manner, as not to accord with the description given. Our Society, however, thinks it right to abstain from those amusements; both because of their frequent connexion with places and circumstances, which are highly objectionable; and because we conceive they can scarcely be entered into, without an improper employment of that time, which we are required not to waste, but to pass in fear, and to redeem." (*Tuke's Principles, London ed. p. 151, 152.*)

"John Thirlwell, in a pamphlet reprobating some of the favourite dramas of the London theatres, says, 'they are calculated to corrupt the morals, and instil the most dangerous and criminal maxims. Did we wish to root up every religious and moral principle of the heart; did we wish our children to become familiar with crime; to blunt and deaden those delicate sensibilities which shrink at the touch of vice; did we wish to harden them to scenes of blasphemy, cruelty and revenge, we would invite them to the sight of the most popular plays which are now performed on our stage; we would send them for instruction to those schools, where, by the

most subtle and malicious contrivance, vice is decked out in the air of virtue, and the deluded youth is seduced to the road of ruin, while he believes that he indulges in the noblest feelings of his nature; where a casual act of generosity is applauded, whilst obvious and commanded duties are trampled on, and a fit of charity is made the sponge of every sin, and the substitute of every virtue.'"—*Burder's Lecture.*

When we consider the shortness and uncertainty of time; and the momentous concerns of eternity, to which we are rapidly approaching, we shall reasonably conclude, that we have ample employment for the little time we have.

The idea that religion is all gloomy and melancholy in its features and feelings, is intimately connected with the thirst for amusement and recreation. Hence, while the latter are desired with increasing avidity, the former is shunned as something incompatible with happiness in this life. And even some who believe in the necessity of religion, consider that the fashionable amusements and recreations of the world are still necessary, to give sprightliness and variety to religious enjoyments. These ideas have been extremely prejudicial to the real happiness and religious improvement of mankind. Although it has been expressly declared, that we "cannot serve two masters," thousands are pursuing a course of reasoning and practice, as if the thing were still practicable. But the result still proves the declaration of our



Lord—they “cleave to the one, and despise the other.”

It is true that religion casts a shade over the vanities of the world, and exhibits vice in all its disgusting deformity. It represents this life, with all its enjoyments, as transitory and precarious. It does more. It shows the insignificance of pride, and humbles the mind under a sense of its own weakness and unworthiness, and the awful responsibility in which it is placed. But this is only a small portion of the views it unfolds. The renovated mind “is introduced into a field of observation, which, like its divine Author, is altogether unlimited.” The wisdom, power, and goodness of God afford an inexhaustible theme of contemplation; the work of redemption, an unfailing source of the finest feelings of gratitude; the past, the present, and the future unite in filling up the full measure of happiness, that constitutes a foretaste of the joys of heaven. While the power and presence of the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, are felt and enjoyed, “the past will bring to their gladdened remembrance the mercies and deliverances of the Lord, and the future will open to them the prospect, and satisfy them with the assurance of being his for ever.” (*London Epistle.*)

Well might the King of Israel, who knew the extent of sensual enjoyments, prefer to be a door-keeper in the house of his God, rather than to dwell in the tents of wickedness—concluding that a day in his courts was better than a thousand employed in the fading or sinful pleasures of time.

Those good works which proceed from this source may also be mentioned, as affording a pure and dignified enjoyment. To relieve the distresses of our fellow-creatures, by acts of benevolence, and to fill up our various duties in life with propriety, will, without creating an improper dependence on works, secure to the mind a source of recollections, in comparison with which, the fashionable amusements of the world sink into insignificance.

Such is the Christian experience. Such his sublime enjoyment. He is preserved in that evenness of temper, that renders his ordinary duties and avocations pleasing. It gives the ties of nature and of friendship their due strength, and sweetens all his domestic enjoyments. Preserved from the torment of unreal wants, by a proper estimate of things—and from fearful anticipations of the future, by an humble trust in the protecting care of a beneficent providence—he can enjoy the present good, and cheerfully anticipate the future. Even his afflictions are sweetened by resignation, and the confidence that all things will work together for good. Where, then, are the hours that are to hang heavily on the minds of true Christians? Where that melancholy that must be dispelled by mixing in the follies and vices of the thoughtless or the licentious? It is all a delusion. The recreations of the Christian are of a different kind. They are found in the subjugation of those passions and propensities that bind the soul to earth—and in the renewed prevalence of the divine influence.



The reading of novels is subject to many of the objections which are advanced against the exhibitions of the theatre: and perhaps to some which do not apply to the latter amusements. They very generally have a highly immoral tendency. And this objection is increased by the consideration of the specious and fascinating covering with which that tendency is concealed. By this means, the young, the ardent, and those who possess a large portion of sensibility, drink deep of the moral poison, while they perhaps think they are only indulging the laudable, and even amiable feelings, with which they are indued.

*Love* is a prevailing theme with novel writers, and is equally so with novel readers. In heightening the incidents of the story, in order to produce that excitement of the passions, without which, the novel would be considered insipid, it frequently happens, that the most important principles of morality, and rules of social order, are represented as cruel abridgments of human happiness; and too often the abhorrence of vice, is lost in the sympathy excited for the vicious.

Those who have indulged largely in this kind of reading, well know they have been enslaved by it. They know that after having feasted on the high seasoned tales of fancy, they have very little relish for the plain, simple doctrines of Christianity, or even the sober duties of life. They know that the passions are inflamed, and the restraints of religion rendered more irksome, and the enjoyments of practical piety become less desired. Even parental

tenderness and care, are represented as intrusions of cruelty and power.

Were we to consider the subject with reference to *economy* alone, there would be sufficient grounds to abandon this species of reading. The term *economy*, will apply to *time* and *feeling*, as well as to the expense that is thus wasted. There is no individual that acquires a strong relish for novels, who does not suffer it to occupy time, that is demanded by important concerns. And as to *feelings*, even in those cases in which the principles of morality are not concerned, where the passions excited, are considered of the amiable kind, I consider there is a very improper waste of such feelings. Those feelings, so far as they are valuable, were given us for practical purposes, to be directed to real objects, and not expended on objects, which have no existence but in imagination. We may be as prodigal of *sympathy*, as of money, direct it to quite as improper objects, and render ourselves as destitute of the one as the other, when real objects are presented to us. Thus it has been observed, that the sentimental novel reader, would rise with tears, from the perusal of her favourite tale, and spurn the beggar from her door.

Considering our duties, as rational and accountable creatures—the important purposes which we have to accomplish, during the short period of human life: it is a deeply interesting enquiry, how our time should be applied? When we contemplate the feelings which arise, in the moments of levity and forgetfulness of God—that they are inevitably



succeeded by conflict and suffering, how can we coolly place ourselves within the sphere of their influence? It is one of the very solemn reflections, suggested by divine revelation: "that for every idle word, we shall be brought into judgment." The amusements of the vain, and the gratifications of the licentious, though fleeting in themselves, are yet to arise in judgment, when every one must give an account, to the Author of his existence, for the application of the time and talents, with which he had been entrusted.

"Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be, in all holy conversation and godliness; looking for, and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?"

"Nevertheless," said the same apostle, "we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless." 2 Pet. iii. 11, &c.

## CHAP. XV.

### OF OATHS.

THE gospel dispensation, we think, superseded the use of oaths. The clear and unequivocal precepts of our Lord, we believe, *are* binding upon Christians. “Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths. But I say unto you, SWEAR NOT AT ALL: neither by heaven, for it is God’s throne, nor by the earth, for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King; neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black: but let your communication be yea, yea: nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil,” Matt. v. 33—37.

The apostle James adverts to the same thing, in the impressive language, “But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by *any other* oath: but let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation,” James v. 12. It is strange, indeed, that precepts so positive and clear should



be construed away to mean any thing that professors please.

The construction, by which it is attempted to destroy the obligation of these precepts, is too bold and too weak to be admitted. It is too bold, because by such a licence the whole body of Christian doctrine might be subjected to the most palpable innovation. What would become of the morality of mankind, if such latitude were taken in explaining the moral law? It is weak, because it supposes that our Lord and his apostles did not intend to prohibit *legal* oaths, but only the use of profane language; when legal oaths were the very subject on which the command was given. The oaths of the law, (which were judicial,) were distinctly brought into view, as practised under the former dispensation, but prohibited under the gospel. The prohibition is complete. It not only enumerates certain kinds of oaths, but it says, "Swear not at all." Now, I would ask those who contend for the practice, if he that swears before a justice of the peace, can be said to "swear not at all?" It must either be said, that a judicial oath is not an oath, or that it violates the command of Jesus Christ. Our Lord goes on further to say, that "whatsoever is more than these (yea and nay,) cometh of evil." Again, we are brought to the point, that an *oath* is no more than yea, or nay—or that it cometh of evil. We cannot hesitate on this question, that it is more than a simple affirmative or negative, of course we must acknowledge that it comes of evil, and ought to be laid aside,

or we must positively contradict our Lord and Saviour.

The admonition of the apostle James is equally hard to reconcile to the practice of taking oaths. "*Above all things, my brethren, swear not.*" And, after enumerating several kinds of oaths, he adds, "Neither by *any other oath.*" Here it will devolve on the advocates for oaths to prove, in the first place, that he who swears before a civil officer *swears not*; or, in the next place, that it is neither by any of the oaths enumerated by the apostle—"nor by any other oath." Nor ought we to pass lightly over the manner in which the apostle closes his admonition. For, after excluding *every* kind of oath, he adds, "Lest ye fall into condemnation." Here condemnation stands as the inevitable consequence of a violation of this precept in its most unlimited acceptation.

We all admit the authority of the Scriptures, and a great majority of those who contend for oaths profess to believe, that they are the *only* rule of faith and practice. And yet the most clear, positive, and explicit passages are made to give way to *constructions*, of a very untenable description.

But it is said that Jesus Christ took an oath, when brought before the chief priest, previous to his crucifixion.

This objection is founded on the words of the chief priest, "I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether," &c. Whatever of an oath was in these expressions is chargeable to the priest, and not to Jesus Christ. Our Lord had no agency in it whatever. Nor does it appear that the



answer which he gave afterwards had any reference to the manner of the charge. He gave the answers which he pleased, according to his inscrutable wisdom, and not under the coercion of the authority of the priest, or his adjuration; for it does not appear that he pursued any different course from that which he would have pursued without it.

If an oath can be imposed entirely at the will of the officer, and without the consent or agency of him that swears, it differs very widely from the common understanding of mankind. And, as it would not be in the power of any man to refuse to swear, so neither could it possibly bind, as a moral obligation. Upon this ground also, as the early members of this society, were never backward, in acknowledging their fidelity to the governments, under which they lived, the civil authorities always had it in their power, to convert these declarations into oaths of allegiance.

But this would not be acknowledged by any; and yet it must follow, if it be considered that the charge of the chief priest, constituted an oath, on the part of our Saviour.

The various forms of expression, used by the apostle Paul, and insisted on by some, as equivalent to swearing, are not oaths, nor are they so considered in any *legal* proceedings.

It may also be observed, that the primitive Christians for the first 300 years, considered it unlawful to swear. For the testimonies in support of this assertion, the reader may consult Barclay's Apology, p. 554, 555, and W. Penn's Works, vol. 2, p. 363.

The primitive Christians were not alone in their ideas of oaths. It is well known that many of the most pious heathen had a clear view of some of the principles of the Gospel. Among these is the subject of oaths. (*Vide Barclay's Apol. p. 553, 554.*)

An important objection was formerly made to the abrogation of oaths, on account of the security which they were supposed to afford to the community. It was even imagined that justice could not be administered, nor government itself be supported without oaths. And this sentiment was avowed, both from the pulpit and the seat of justice. This fact affords strong evidence of the power of prejudice, and the weakness of human reasoning when founded on expediency, as opposed to the precepts of Jesus Christ. But such was the infatuation of mankind, not two centuries ago, that from reasoning like this, they reconciled themselves to punish as malefactors, men, and even females, who feeling a reverent regard for the precepts of our Lord, could not swear; depriving them of their property, their liberty, and even of their lives, (indirectly,) while those who could swear and *for-swear*, were suffered not only to roam at large, but prey on the best interests of society!

This delusion is now over, in part. Enlightened and liberal minded men, of different denominations, do not *now* suppose that oaths are essentially necessary to the support of civil government; and the laws themselves admit affirmations instead of oaths.\*

\* This remark applies in its full extent to the laws of the United States.



We might therefore suppose, that the practice would be abandoned; as all dread of consequences is removed, and it is found that a simple affirmation answers *all* the purposes that ever could reasonably be expected from oaths. And indeed, considering the light which has been cast on the subject—that not one solitary advantage can result from the judicial use of oaths, instead of affirmations, but on the contrary, much evil, independent of the violation of a positive precept of Jesus Christ—it is not less strange that they should now be sanctioned by an enlightened and religious people, than that they should have been considered, in a less enlightened age, of absolute necessity in civil society.

The imposition of an oath, carries with it the strong presumption, that the individual is not to be believed without it. This idea has an extensively demoralizing effect on those who are placed within the sphere of its influence. It opens a wide door to the disgusting vice of *lying*. When men become reconciled to the idea, that an oath is necessary to the truth, it is a kindred feeling to reconcile them to falsehood, in their ordinary communications. Nor is this the only immoral tendency of requiring oaths, to ensure the truth. It holds out a temptation to swearing in *conversation*. Reconciled, in the first place, to speak falsehood, unless under the coercion of an oath, and, in the next place, to attest the truth by swearing, a disposition is produced in some men, to give their conversation the appearance of truth, by interspersing it with profane oaths. When their feelings are thus

depraved, there is very little dependence on their veracity, either with or without oaths, and the formality of a book, and the aid of a civil officer, would add but little to the obligation.

It is not intended to convey the idea, that these effects are uniformly produced. But that this species of immorality does prevail to a melancholy extent, will hardly be denied, and that the public sanction of oaths, may be numbered among the causes of this vice, I think is equally evident. Still it is readily admitted, that there are many, who occasionally take judicial oaths, without supposing that they are violating a precept of Jesus Christ, and without falling into the practice of using profane language. But even these would do well, seriously to investigate the subject. And I am persuaded that those solemn impressions which they sometimes feel, in contemplation of the subject—before—at the time—or after the taking of an oath, would result in a clear conviction of the impropriety of the practice.

I will draw to a conclusion, with a summary view of the subject.

However the practice of swearing might have been sanctioned in times of ignorance and “hardness of heart,” it was positively prohibited under the Gospel. The primitive Christians, for three hundred years after Christ, maintained the doctrine of the unlawfulness of oaths; and even pious heathen entertained the same principle. It is *now* conclusively proved, that oaths are *not* necessary



for the purposes of civil government, inasmuch as no evil has ever resulted from admitting an *affirmation*, instead of an oath—and there are strong grounds for believing, that the frequent recurrence of judicial oaths, has a powerful influence in producing falsehood and profaneness.

## CHAP. XVI.

### OF WAR.

THE Society of Friends believe, that War is altogether inconsistent with the Spirit and Precepts of the Gospel.

We believe that the Almighty, in the creation of the world, and in placing man on earth, dignified with the Divine image, never designed that he should be the enemy of his species, or that discord and violence should mark his conduct. On the contrary, he was certainly designed to pursue that line of conduct, which would secure his own happiness, and correspond to the attributes of his Creator. His defection from original purity and excellence, proved an inlet to those depraved and violent passions, without which wars would never have had a beginning on earth. Thus the apostle James queried, —“ Whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts, that war in your members?” And no man who has reflected on the subject, can dissent from the apostle. In the original order of human actions and human feelings, there certainly was *harmony*—nothing like the features, or even the seeds of war.



Soon after the fall of our first parents, from this happy state, in which they were no doubt designed to continue, violence and bloodshed made their appearance.

We therefore believe that God, in the formation of all things, designed that man should live in peace and harmony. That wars and violence, were the effects of that diabolical spirit which gained admission into the human heart, through sin: and which the Gospel was designed to eradicate.

If we believe that wars would never have taken place, had man retained his original innocence and command over his passions—if they are the fruits of that malevolent spirit, which gained admission in the *fall*—and further, if we believe that the object of Christ's coming was, to destroy the works of the devil, and to bring in everlasting righteousness—we must believe, that where the Gospel is brought into its just pre-eminence, all wars must cease.

The example of pious persons under the legal dispensation, has been considered as evidence, that war is not inconsistent with the Gospel.

But to this objection, it may be replied, that the practices under the law, do not necessarily establish the same things under the Gospel. The morality of the law, was certainly inferior to that required under the Gospel. It would be injurious to the character of our Lord, and of the dispensation which he introduced, to say that he made no discoveries of Truth, or pointed his followers to no state, in our relations to God and one another, superior to what had been attained before his coming.

The construction of the human mind, requires to be gradually informed and expanded. And as, in the fall, it was sunk into a low and servile state, so, it pleased Divine Goodness to prepare a means for its restoration, by the coming of Jesus Christ into the world; who not only became a propitiation for us, but brought to light those important truths, which had remained obscured for ages and generations, through the weakness and darkness which pervaded the human mind. But in order to prepare mankind for this exalted discovery of Truth, he made use of several dispensations, each successively rising above that which preceded it. First, he revealed his own divine attributes: among these, his sovereignty and power were conspicuously displayed.—His goodness to his creatures, was also strongly impressed. Next, the dependance of man on his bounty, mercy, and protecting providence; the utter helplessness of frail and finite creatures, when left to themselves, or when going counter to the will of the Almighty; and their perfect security, when they cast their care on *Him*. Gratitude to so beneficent a Creator, arose next;—then justice—and love to our fellow creatures.—These were like the rudiments, or first principles of religion, and were summed up in those two comprehensive precepts: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.” “And thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” Matt. xxii. 37, 39; Deut. vi. 5; Lev. xix. 18. And on these hung all the law and the prophets.



But it remained for Jesus Christ to teach and apply these first principles as man never taught. It remained for him, to instruct and to lead man to a more exalted morality than had been known before, and, at the same time, into a more intimate union with God, through the means of a more copious affusion of his own divine influence.

These things being admitted, which cannot be denied, and it will follow that we are not warranted in going back from the excellencies of the gospel to the practices which prevailed under the law.

As Jesus Christ condescended to take our nature upon himself, and walk among men, that he might the more effectually reveal the mysteries of heaven, and raise man to that state which he enjoyed before the introduction of sin into the world, and thus, in the language of the apostle, destroy the works of the devil, we are bound to leave "those things which are behind," and "press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Phil. iii. 13, 14.

Thus, reason, as well as revelation, will support the opinion, that the gospel proposes a more excellent state for man, both in his relations to God and to his fellow-creatures, than had been revealed or attained under the former dispensation.

We are also supported by reason, as well as the evidence of Scripture, in believing that the gospel was designed to restore man to his original moral rectitude, and stamp on him, once more, the divine image. If this was not the case, then the promised

Redeemer was not clothed with sufficient powers; the remedy provided for man's restoration was not sufficient for the purpose.

But it is probable no one will be willing to urge the argument to these consequences; but, on the contrary, admit those truths which cannot be denied, without thus running into the most palpable inconsistency.

The controversy being thus fairly stated, the arguments drawn from a darker age will be found of no force. And indeed all those subtile divisions and subdivisions of the subject which have been devised to widen the discussion into the field of speculation and sophistry, will be, in a great measure, struck off at once; and the question brought into very narrow limits.

It is resolved into a few simple questions. Is war compatible with the original condition of man? or would it have taken place, if man had never fallen? Does the gospel offer complete restoration to fallen man?

On this view of the subject, the answers cannot be doubtful. If, then, war could not have arisen, had man retained his original condition; and, if the gospel offers complete restoration, as to moral rectitude, then wars are incompatible with the gospel.

But, that it may not appear that we shrink from meeting any arguments that can be advanced in support of this sanguinary practice, I will further examine the law and the prophets, on this subject.

It must be recollected, that the morality of the gospel, in all its purity, was not rigidly enjoined



under the law, for this reason, which is also given on the highest authority, "Because of the hardness of their hearts;" or because they were not prepared to comprehend or practise it. Thus, the law in relation to marriages, and the permission, from time to time, given to wage wars, were special acts of condescension to the weakness of mankind—and in both of which cases it might be said, in the language of our Lord, "It was not so in the beginning;" but peace and harmony were as essentially the *order* in which the human family were designed to continue, as connubial attachment and fidelity.

All that can be inferred, in these, and some other cases, permitted under the law, is, that they were so permitted merely in condescension to human weakness. The history of those times evidently proves that there was a check held over the nation of the Jews, in relation to war; as it was their duty to inquire of the Lord, when about to undertake *any military enterprise*. Their neglect of this precaution was not unfrequently the cause of humiliating defeats.

And what, it may be asked, can be argued from the practices thus permitted? It proves, not the lawfulness *now* of things *permitted then*, but that the Sovereign Ruler of the universe was pleased to bear with his creature, man, while in a state of great weakness and hardness of heart, in which he became involved by the entrance "of sin into the world," and a consequent fall from that dignity of character in which he was originally created; that

the remedy provided for his restoration was wisely permitted to be *gradual*, and that He also condescended to *regulate* and *direct* to good purposes those evils which the state of mankind could not bear to be at once eradicated.

“The law,” said the apostle, “was a school-master to lead to Christ.” It took him in a state of ignorance. It inculcated the first principles of moral and religious obligation. It led him, by a gradual progress, towards that enlargement of views, and clear understanding of his duty to God and man, that the gospel gave. And, as those who were under the law were represented as “children,” under a school-master, we may be allowed to continue the allusion, and to inquire, who would undertake to establish the most refined principles of philosophy from the opinions of a child, just instructed in the first rudiments of knowledge? Though under a course of instruction, they were not fully instructed—and the veil remained long on their understandings.

We must, therefore, pass from the practices of those who were under the law, and look to Him who brought life and immortality to light by the gospel.

The pious Christian sees, with humble admiration, the works of an over-ruling providence. He sees that the purposes of men are often changed and defeated—and, even when they are permitted to carry the evil into effect, *that* evil is over-ruled—and good rises in its place. And here he will make a discrimination that is often passed over unseen.



He makes the distribution of good and evil to their proper causes or fountains ; and rests satisfied that it cannot be necessary to “do evil that good may come.” When the gospel has spread, with accelerated progress, under the rage of persecution, he does not consider the persecution necessary to the spreading of the gospel. When nations have wasted one another and themselves with wars, and these wars have finally subsided, and blessings are permitted to come upon them, he attributes these blessings, not to the follies or the crimes of men, but to the goodness of our great and forbearing Creator, who still condescends to dispense his favours, at times, unsought for and unmerited.

Thus, also, though causes and secondary causes are still discovered to have had their agency in producing human calamity, yet the Christian cannot relinquish the belief, that those causes are under the control of Him whose power is over all. We still believe that he chastises nations and individuals ; and he selects the instruments according to his own pleasure. Famine, pestilence, and war have been acknowledged, from earliest antiquity, to be among these. Nor have the attributes of God been denied by any, on the abstract question of his sovereignty and providence. In those public calamities which we ascribe to him, as just judgments on nations, through the instrumentality of earthquakes, famine, or disease, many innocent and even righteous persons are sometimes involved. But look to another state of existence as the great object of our creation, we can readily believe, that

these were "taken away from the evil to come." And thus the mercy of God remains established through all: nor can his immutability be called in question, any more than his mercy; if we believe that, through all preceding dispensations, he was preparing mankind, by the gradual developement of truth, for the reception of the gospel.

The prophecies of Isaiah not only denominate the promised Messiah, the Prince of Peace, but his government is thus remarkably described: "But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove, with equity, *for the meek* of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth; and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked." Isa. xi. 4. Here the protecting providence of God, as exercised over his dependant servants, and particularly *for the meek*, is brought into view.

The prophet goes on to describe the effects of the prevalence of his kingdom: "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid: and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain." Isa. xi. 6—9.

"And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat



their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks : *nation* shall not lift up sword against *nation*, neither shall they learn war any more. O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord." Isa. ii. 4, 5.

If we apply the fore part of this prophecy to the feelings of men, we shall find a remarkable testimony to the regenerating, renovating power of the gospel, as described by the prophet. The principle of violence and cruelty—the spirit of war, as exemplified in the lion, the leopard, the bear, and the deadly serpent, was to be changed—the disposition to do wrong was to be eradicated—the lion eat straw as the ox,—and a little child (emblem of innocence,) to lead them.

But these striking metaphors have a more extensive application. They clearly apply to the present state of the world, and not exclusively to a period in which evil shall cease in the earth. They apply to a mixed state of society. The lamb and the wolf to dwell together—the leopard and the kid—the calf and the young lion—the cow and the bear—the unconscious, incautious child and the asp—what more clearly could represent the mixed state of society, than these metaphors? That the wolf, the leopard, the lion, the bear, and the serpent represented, in part, the wicked, among which the righteous are dispersed, is further evident from the subsequent prophecy—"And he shall judge among the nations, and rebuke many people." Did the preceding part of the prophecy relate entirely to a state of things in which there

was no mixture of moral evil, there would have been no *rebuke*. But this latter verse brings into view the over-ruling providence and protecting care of the great Ruler of the universe. It shows that there is a power that can restrain the wrath of man, and that this power would be exercised on behalf of those who have neither disposition nor capacity to repel force by force, or meet violence, cruelty, and deep, insidious guile and malignity, in their own way.

The views given by this prophecy are peculiarly calculated to silence the objections which are made to the principles of peace, from the supposed insuperable difficulties opposed to it by the present state of society. In the review of this portion of Scripture, we may well inquire, with the apostle, whether these things were intended to be literally taken? “Doth God take care for oxen? Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written,” 1 Cor. ix. 9, 10. Scattered and intermixed, as the servants of Christ are, among those who may be compared to lions, wolves, and serpents—how consoling it is to be assured, that there is a power which can over-rule and bind down every thing that would hurt or destroy—and preserve the innocent and unresisting in safety! And not only that the one can be over-ruled, and the other preserved, but that “the little child” shall lead even the violent and ferocious into practices of innocence and peace!

And this is confirmed by other Scripture authori-



ties, and by the experience of the disciples of Christ. "When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." Prov. xvi. 7. Various are the passages, in the Holy Scriptures, which emphatically declare the power and protecting care of the Almighty over his dependant children. That "the very hairs of your head are numbered," Luke xii. 7, and that "he keeps them as the apple of the eye," Deut. xxxii. 10.; and "no weapon formed against them shall prosper." "This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord." Isa. liv. 17.

These promises—these impressive views of the protecting providence of the Almighty—should surely silence our fears, and induce us to trust in Him—and the more especially, as they have been realized through all ages. But our own preservation is, by no means, the only object to be regarded. Our faithfulness may have a powerful influence on those around us—even on the depraved. They may not only be disarmed of the disposition to hurt or destroy—but, seeing the excellence of the Christian character, and feeling the power of meekness, they may yield to the leadings of that principle which is compared, by the prophet, to a little child.

Where then are the "strong reasons" for being driven from the practice of virtue by the depravity of others? If we leave the divine Master, to whom can we go for protection? Who, like Him, has all power in heaven and in earth? Where is the

peace of the wicked; and what is the protection on which they rely?

The Christian is called, in figurative language, “the salt of the earth” and “the light of the world.” Let us, then, for the sake of our own safety and salvation, for the honour of God, and the diffusion of light in the world—even among those who are in a state of darkness and depravity—endeavour, through the aid of his grace, to maintain the dignity, the excellence, and the practicability of the precepts of Jesus Christ. They are adapted to the help and guidance of such creatures as we are. And we should press forward “toward the mark for the prize” they present to our view, and thus rise above the depravity of human nature, as existing in the present state of society—rather than warp, adulterate, and bring down the gospel system, to suit and sanction the depravity of man.

In this prophecy, also, the divine power and providence are set forth in the first place. And then the peaceable nature of Christ’s kingdom is described in a manner so clear, as not to be easily misunderstood. Indeed, the practice of war, and even the learning of war, were to cease, in proportion to the prevalence of the kingdom of the Messiah, or as the mountain of the Lord’s house became exalted above the hills.

In addition to these clear prophecies, the case of David may be brought into view. He was a man of remarkable piety; at least that piety which was consistent with the morality of the law, a few cases of criminality excepted; and for these he expe-



rienced deep repentance and forgiveness. He made large preparations to build a temple to the Lord—but was forbidden on the grounds that he had been a man of war, and shed much blood. This was a decided evidence, that war was not consistent with that righteousness which was to be revealed. Solomon, who was permitted to build the temple, was a man of peace—and the nation, while employed in rearing that edifice, though an outward work, was preserved in a state of peace.

It is further remarkable, that a general peace over the earth preceded the birth of our Lord, and continued for 12 years, during which time the temple of Janus\* at Rome was shut. Thus, though wars had prevailed through the lapse of ages which preceded the coming of Christ—though the Almighty had directed the scourge where to fall, and to what extent, on his enemies, or those whose crimes had rendered them obnoxious to his just judgments; yet the prophet, speaking of the gospel dispensation, says, “The work of righteousness *shall* be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever.” Isa. xxxii. 17.

When the birth of our Lord was announced by angels, it was in language designed to describe the effects to be derived from his coming: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth *peace*, good-will towards men,” Luke ii. 14. His coming was the effect of the love of God; hence, *love* became the

\* The temple of Janus was kept open during war—and shut only in a time of universal peace.

distinguishing mark of his disciples. If, then, we look back to the prophets who described the nature of his kingdom, to the circumstances which preceded, and those which attended his birth, as well as to his precepts and example—we shall see strong evidences that his coming was to eradicate those evil passions from the human heart, without which wars could not arise; and not only to put away all wrath, malice, strife, and evil surmising, but to imbue the mind with the seeds of meekness, charity, and love. And this became the characteristic badge of discipleship.

“Let this mind be in you,” said the apostle; “which was in Christ.” This also corresponds with the precepts of our Lord. For, as he exemplified in his own life the meek, non-resisting, forgiving Spirit—so he enjoined it on his followers.

His precepts, in relation to this subject, have a direct allusion to the practices under the law: “Ye have heard that it hath been said, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth,” [simple retaliation,] “but I say unto you, that ye resist not evil.” “Ye have heard that it hath been said, thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy, but I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you, that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven.” Matt. v. 43—45. Was our Lord amusing his audience with imaginary excellencies? was he enjoining impossibilities? Far



from it. He exemplified his precepts in his own conduct. Even when expiring on the cross, he interceded for his enemies: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Luke xxiii. 34.

There is another incident recorded by the evangelist, that deserves to be particularly noticed. It will be recollected that, when he sent his disciples out, without scrip or purse—destitute of outward dependance for sustenance or safety—he reminded them that he sent them out as sheep among wolves. As the time of his crucifixion drew near, he recalled this event to their remembrance; and inquired of them, if they lacked any thing, when thus sent out, destitute of every thing but the presence of his Spirit and the protection of providence. And they could now acknowledge that they lacked nothing. Then said he unto them, "But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip, and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one." Luke xxii. 36. Of weapons they found *two* swords. This, though totally useless on the policy of the world, was enough for the purposes intended—to impress, in a striking manner, the lesson he designed to convey. The little band of disciples were thus provided, when the Jews, led on by Judas the traitor, laid hands on their divine Master. At this trying moment, Peter, bold in his nature, and prompt to do what man could do—drew his sword for the *defence* of himself, his dearest friends, and his Lord and

Master. "Put up again thy sword into his place," was the divine command—"for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." Matt. xxvi. 52.

Thus, in his divine wisdom and condescension, he was pleased to place them in a situation, the most sensibly to feel the extent of his precepts, in relation to non-resistance. He also reminded them of the power he could command. Nor was it necessary that legions of angels should be summoned to his aid. Though it was then his intention to submit—though every thing in his appearance was simple, humble, meek, and non-resisting, his enemies "went backward, and fell to the ground."

But, passing on with the narrative—"His disciples forsook him, and fled!" What a striking contrast do these events form, with those to which their attention had so lately been called! When sent without means, not even staves to lean upon, even the devils were subject to the power with which they were clothed.

On a review of this portion of Scripture, we are forcibly impressed with the conviction, that our Lord, in directing swords to be provided for that particular occasion, did not intend that they should be used as weapons of offence or defence; but to afford an opportunity to prohibit the use of them for ever. His query to Peter, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of



angels?" &c. clearly proves that he never looked to his disciples for protection, and that he wanted not the sword for that purpose. But he goes further to show its unlawfulness, and the injury that they who use it inflict on themselves, by saying, "For all they that take the sword, shall perish with the sword:" and, connecting the two circumstances together, as he did, he brought them to see, and what is more, to *feel* the difference there is between depending on Him alone, and any reliance we can place on ourselves and the resources within our reach.

But why should we go into a more minute detail of evidence, to prove that Jesus Christ, both in his precepts and example, led his disciples from the spirit and practice of war?

No two things can form a more striking contrast, than His character, and that of a military man. If, then, our Lord had nothing of the spirit of war about Him, and if we are bound to imitate his example, then, war is totally incompatible with the Christian character.

It is not necessary to dwell on arguments in support of the first proposition. The whole history of his life stands in evidence of it. The second is proved by many pointed Scripture testimonies: for, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

And what renders the subject clear beyond all doubt, is, that the primitive Christians believed in the unlawfulness of war, during two centuries.

And, while it is known that they were subject to every ordinance of man for conscience sake, either actively or passively; actively when they could with a good conscience, and passively and meekly, when human requisitions came in conflict with the law written in the heart; when we consider that Christianity makes us what we should be, in all our social relations, it cannot be supposed that the primitive believers refused to bear arms merely from a refractory disposition. No, they knew too well the duties we owe to each other, to do this. It was the *principle* on which they stood. Hence, that impressive reply, that was made by a youth who was ordered to enrol himself, "I am a Christian, and therefore I cannot fight." There are many pointed cases afforded by ecclesiastical history, to establish this fact—that the Christians did not bear arms during the first two centuries after the Christian era.

The writers of those times believed that the prophecy of Isaiah, that men should beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks, was then in the act of completion.

Irenæus, who wrote about the year 180, says that this famous prophecy had been completed in his time: "For Christians," says he, "have changed their swords and lances into instruments of peace, and they know not how to fight."

Justin Martyr, who lived about the same time, bears a testimony equally clear and conclusive, in these words, "That the prophecy is fulfilled, you have good reason to believe: for we, who in times



past killed one another, do not now fight with our enemies." And the word which is used in the original does not mean private contest, as between man and man, but war; and the word enemies does not apply to individual adversaries, but to enemies of the state.

A number of other evidences might be produced to prove the position here laid down; but two that I shall notice will render any others unnecessary.

Within about 40 years after the crucifixion of our Lord, the city of Jerusalem, and the whole nation of the Jews were broken up in a manner that has no parallel in history. At that time the number of the Jews who had embraced Christianity was very considerable. About ten years before this, it was, that Paul attended the meeting of elders, &c. at Jerusalem, when they said unto him, "Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe." Acts xxi. 20. We may fairly conclude that the number had increased in the course of time which had elapsed between this period and that at which Jerusalem was besieged by the Romans. But, however numerous they might be, it appears that they took no part in the wars of that eventful period. Relying on divine protection, and guided by divine revelation, they left the city of Jerusalem, and all the land of Judea, and resorted to a village beyond Jordan, called Pella. And here they were so effectually preserved, that it does not appear that one single Christian perished.

This is a striking evidence of their taking no part in war—and of the protecting providence that was extended over them in those calamities. The Jews, it may be remembered, argued, “If we let this man alone, all men will believe on him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation.” How dreadfully was this apprehension realized in the course of their own policy, while they who “believed in Him,” and adhered to his precepts of non-resistance, were safe amidst the most shocking convulsions of nations, that ever marked the history of the world. (*Vide Eusebius’s Ecclesiastical History, Book 3. chap. 5—9.*)

About the close of the period in which the Christians did not bear arms, Celsus, who wrote against them, laid every charge against them that he supposed could operate to their disadvantage. Origen wrote a reply to deny what was false, and explain what was misrepresented. Among the charges brought forward by Celsus, against the Christians, he said, “that they refused to bear arms even in cases of necessity.” And objected that, if the rest of the empire were of their opinion, it would soon be over-run by the barbarians. Origen admitted the facts as stated by Celsus, and vindicated the practice of the early Christians, on the principle of the unlawfulness of war. When it is remembered that this charge was brought forward by an enemy of the Christians, and acknowledged by the very man who undertook their vindication; when it is further recollected



how easily the charge might have been repelled, if it had been unfounded, there cannot remain a doubt of the sufficiency of this evidence.

The names of Tatian, Clemens of Alexandria, Tertullian, Cyprian, Lactantius, Archelaus, Ambrose, Chrysostom, and Cyril, may be added, as affording evidence to the point in question. Ecclesiastical history, also, affords a number of instances of individual suffering—even to death itself, purely for a refusal to bear arms.

We will not venture to call in question the uniform practice of the Christian church, when that practice could not be influenced in any degree by a bias in favour of the former dispensation. It was, at once, at variance with the maxims and policy that prevailed both among the Jews and other nations; yet, such was the clear understanding which the believers of that day had of the precepts of our Lord, that the practice of the church was uniform, in this respect, for two centuries at least.

An argument is frequently advanced against the principle we hold, in relation to war, from what is called the *law of nature*. It is a common propensity in animated beings, whether rational or not, to defend themselves from aggression; and hence it has been supposed, that this propensity must have the sanction of the Deity himself.

The whole argument is more specious than solid: and, like the other arguments in favour of war, cannot bear the test of impartial examination.

Are the propensities of *nature*—those which

actuate alike the brute creation, and the most depraved of the human race, to be regarded as the clear indications of the divine will? If so, what passions so gross, what practice so vile, that may not be justified by the very same argument? To follow *nature* and all its impulses—to imitate the brute creation, would be made consistent with reason and religion! This would be, at once, to banish morality and religion from the earth.

That some animals are provided with weapons of defence, adds nothing to the force of the objection. Are not the far greater part of these provided with weapons of *offence*, as well as defence? Do not a large portion of such animals subsist by violence and depredation? So that, if the argument is admitted at all, it will go to justify, not only offensive wars, but even *robbery*, piracy, and every species of plunder, violence, and outrage, between man and man.

The argument itself is not only untenable, but it stands opposed to the whole Christian system. It is a resort, not to the precepts of Jesus Christ—not to his example, or the example of his immediate followers—but to *nature*—to an impulse or passion that influences the brute creation—particularly the most ferocious species. And, where it is discoverable in the human race, it is most clearly displayed in those who are the least under the influence of Christian feelings.

The gospel was designed to raise man above the violent, as well as the low and grovelling propensi-



ties of nature ; and this I consider one of its noblest characters.

Thus, if we appeal to reason, to revelation, or to history, still the result is the same ; war is incompatible with the gospel. The prophets declared it *would be*, and the Christians bore testimony, both in word and conduct, that it *was*.

And why should the wise of this world be stumbled at this? except on this important ground, that the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. Man never was designed to live without God in the world. Who would be willing to say that he could sustain himself without his divine providence? And, if his providence is admitted—we must admit also that *he* can preserve us, without leaving us to the alternative of disobeying his commands, to preserve our rights or our existence. Indeed it is madness to expect preservation on this ground.

The alarming idea that, on the principle of non-resistance, we should be exposed to the encroachments of ambition, and other depraved passions, is built entirely on a disbelief of the providence of our divine Parent. A disbelief equally at variance with reason and revelation. It is opposed also to the undisputed evidence of history. But thousands of instances could be cited, in which reliance was placed in vain on the policy of war. Consult the annals of war, and how many have been its victims ! Our understandings would be lost in the numbers. The settlement of Pennsylvania is a pleasing specimen of the effect of Christian princi-

ples, as contrasted with the policy of war. There is another specimen of greater antiquity; and I will add, of more weight, because it was nearer to primitive times. It is the case of the destruction of Jerusalem. The Jews depended on themselves; and what became of them and their city? They exhibited a scene of destruction and carnage, never before exceeded. At that very juncture, the Christians, without mixing in the war spirit, or the dictates of human wisdom, simply cast themselves on God for protection—and they found it. Led by that arm which is still found to be around and underneath the true Christian, they were directed to a place of safety—while their infatuated countrymen—(both their place and nation,) were swept with the besom of destruction. Look back at the history of the church, through all ages, and what is more remarkable and obvious, than the unfailing providence of God? Has he not, in all ages, been their bow and battle-axe, their sun and shield? Has he not proved that his name is a strong tower, into which the righteous may run and find safety? Has he ever left them so destitute, as to drive them from an observance of his law, to obtain a better protection to themselves, than he would afford them? No, never: the righteous have never been forsaken, nor warranted in making flesh their arm, or putting their trust in man. Even during that dispensation under which wars were sometimes permitted, the most conclusive evidence was given, that this was not necessary as a means of preservation. How often were the most signal vic-



tories obtained by the most unlikely means ! How often were the Israelites delivered from their enemies by special interpositions of providence, when all outward succour and resources failed ! And why should we call in question, either the power or the providence of God ?

In that memorable appearance of our Lord to his disciples, after his resurrection, he made use of these expressions, " All power is given unto me, in heaven and in earth." And again, " Lo ! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Who, then, that believes in these gracious declarations, can suppose that we dare not comply with the precepts of our Lord, or imitate his example, for fear of the consequences ? Or are we, after all the light that has been afforded, to suppose that we are better acquainted with the human heart than he is—that the system he has laid down for the regulation of our conduct is not adapted to the condition of mankind, and therefore we are at liberty, and able to devise another scheme of preservation, in which we can have more dependence upon *ourselves*, and less upon *him* ? This indeed is the very summit of folly. Who would be willing to be cut off from the protecting care of Almighty God ? And who can expect the blessings of his providence, but in obedience to his requisitions ?

Thus, if we look back to past ages, we shall be irresistibly led to the conclusion, that in the original order of things, as first constituted by the divine Author, there was nothing in the human character that was congenial to war. That this afflictive

scourge was the effect of those passions and motives which spring up in the depraved nature, and which the spirit of the gospel was designed to eradicate, and which it *does* eradicate in all those who thoroughly submit to its operations. That mankind, being sunk into a state far, very far below their original purity and dignity, were not capable of coming up, at once, into the full practice and enjoyment of the excellencies of the gospel. Hence, the personal appearance of our Lord, the discoveries of the mysteries of his kingdom, and the requisitions which necessarily accompanied that discovery, were deferred, until, by an easy gradation of dispensations, their minds were prepared for the important event. And here it may be remarked, that every discovery of truth carries with it a proportionate obligation on the life and conduct of him to whom the revelation is made. Hence the gradual developement of truth, through early ages, because mankind were not prepared to come under the requisitions or obligations that would necessarily have followed, nor indeed were they prepared for that enlargement of views itself. In all this we discover the wisdom and condescending goodness of God, to deal with mankind according to their weakness and capacity.

Continuing the retrospective view, we find a course of instruction was instituted, through the medium of the law and the prophets, and many striking events, that were calculated to make a strong impression. In this course of instruction were to be noticed particularly the clear, impressive evi-



dences of divine power and providence—the incapacity of man to command the smallest blessing by his own unassisted efforts, the omnipotence of the divine Being, and his interposition in human affairs, both to protect his dependant servants, and to overrule the schemes and malevolent designs of those who were disposed to disregard his divine will. It also pleased him, who thus instituted this school of instruction, to give mankind, through the medium of prophecy, some clear views of the dispensation that was ultimately to be introduced.

The new covenant dispensation was introduced by the Son of God, in a personal appearance on earth—who explained it by precept, and illustrated it by example. That dispensation was designed to restore man to a state of acceptance, by bringing him into a participation of the divine nature. This constitutes the new creature, in which old things are done away, and all things become new; new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Here all the corrupt and malevolent passions are subjugated, and the Spirit of Jesus Christ becomes the ruling principle in us. The feelings and temper thus produced being a preparation for, and a foretaste of heaven.

In the precepts and example of our Lord, no trace of the war spirit or policy could be found. On the contrary, the practice of forbearance, non-resistance, and forgiveness of injuries was enforced in the most explicit manner; and every feeling that could possibly lead to violence between man and man was as clearly prohibited. It was the

design of our divine Lawgiver to lay the axe to the root of the corrupt tree, and this was in no case more obvious, than in relation to war. Every feeling that could lead to strife, discord, or violence being interdicted. If these are eradicated, the fruit cannot be produced.

When we contemplate the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, forming a perfect contrast to the war character, and remember that this was designed as a pattern for our conduct—when we consider his precepts, and reflect that these are of perpetual obligation, and further bring to mind that his followers took no part in wars for more than two hundred years after his personal appearance on earth, can we entertain a doubt of the incompatibility of war with the duties of a Christian? Can we draw any other conclusion, than that in adopting the spirit and practice of *war*, we must act so inconsistent with the precepts and example of Jesus Christ—and the example of his followers—as to amount to a dereliction of Christianity itself. We cannot be actuated by the Spirit that was in Christ, nor walk by the rules which he laid down, nor maintain any thing like the character of his followers, during the purity of the church. If these positions be true, and even the advocates for war will be bound to admit that they are, will it not follow, as an undeniable conclusion, that no man can maintain two characters, so totally different from each other, at the same time? “Ye cannot serve two masters:” “Doth a fountain send forth, at the same place, sweet water and bitter?”



“By their fruits ye shall know them,” said our Lord; and the rule remains good to the present day.

Who can be at a loss, in fixing the character of the work of death and desolation? Can we hesitate a moment, in ascribing it to the influence of him, who was a murderer from the beginning? “The works of your father ye will do,” said our Lord to the Pharisees. And whose works can be the destruction of human happiness, and the devastation of the works of God?

However the feelings of charity may prompt us to draw a veil over the infirmities and deformities of human nature, the cause of humanity and religion has too long and too deeply suffered by war, to permit any part of its character to be concealed, through motives of delicacy or tenderness towards those who are in this practice.

It cannot escape the notice of those who reflect on the subject, that the appendages of military parade, the hilarity and various gratifications associated with such parade, and the emoluments, and the applause that are frequently obtained by war, are so many causes, actively operating to keep alive the war spirit; and of course actually producing war. Those who contend that war is unavoidable, in the present state of society, and therefore take an active part in thus keeping alive the war spirit, are chargeable with perpetuating that insuperable obstacle to the establishment of peace on earth. If war is an evil, as all rational men must confess, how can any reconcile to themselves

the idea of perpetuating that evil. So great is the magnitude of the evils, so horrible the scenes inseparably connected with war; that, independent of all arguments drawn from the *impiety* of the practice, we should think that men could hardly feel so little repugnance, at producing those calamities, as they do. The prospect presented by the world around us, seems too fully to justify the reflections of the poet Cowper :

“ There is no flesh in man’s obdurate heart,

It does not feel for man.

The natural bond of brotherhood is severed as the flax,

That falls asunder at the touch of fire.”

Indeed, when we consider the enormous mass of misery and of guilt that has been produced by war, it becomes an inquiry of no ordinary consequence, to ascertain how far we are individually chargeable with that guilt.

But, after all the calamity and guilt which have thus deformed the human character, we may ask the question, what has been obtained? Not safety—not happiness—not liberty—not virtue. Look round over the nations of the earth, both ancient and modern, and say, where is that people, who, placing their dependance on the sword, remained half a century without being involved in calamities of the most afflictive nature—the sacrifice of immense treasure, and of human life and happiness? No nation upon earth, has ever attained to safety by the war policy. Danger, though sometimes concealed, was still lurking near. When the alarm



of war, or the spirit of retaliation spreads over a nation, ask then if they are happy—ask the soldier, torn from the bosom of his family—ask the disconsolate wife and children left behind, who listen to every passing wind, as bearing the messages of death—if they are happy. Ask the widow, and the orphan, after the contest is over—ask the veteran, who has met his brother in the field of battle, and seen him mix in the mangled mass of mortality. Happiness is a stranger to these conditions. Of all abridgments of natural rights, none is so great as that produced by *war*. Military government is perfectly despotic.

Ask the conqueror, who has risen to the summit of his ambition—who has rode triumphant over slaughtered thousands, wrapped cities in flames, and hurled empires into ruins—ask him if he is happy: ask him what he has gained by conquest. Let the characters of the greatest heroes of ancient or modern times be consulted. What was Alexander the Great? He carried his arms and his conquests wherever he thought there was an object worth his notice, and wept because he could not find another world to conquer. He was tossed by every tempest of passion,—and died in the midst of his days, and his end was among fools. What was Pompey? One of the greatest generals that ever directed the Roman legions. He rose to power and fame by the success of battles, and sunk by the very means of his former aggrandizement—became a fugitive from the sword—was assassinated by those on whom he had thrown himself for safety—and

finally, his body, left unburied on the sands, was burned by an old fisherman, on a pile of rubbish. And what better was Cæsar, who overthrew him? He became a great man, (if power could make him great,) at the expense of millions of human lives. He rioted a while in the sunshine of prosperity, if prosperity it might be called, and died by the hands of his friends.

And thus we might trace the pages of history—descending from age to age, we find neither happiness nor safety obtained by the sword.

Nor are there less striking instances in modern, than in ancient times. And through all, we shall find these bold adventurers, who feared not God, nor regarded man, though nations had trembled at their displeasure, were as much the victims of their own madness, as the humblest soldier that perished in their battles. “Action and re-action,” said a modern writer, “are equal in the moral, as in the natural world.”\* And when we injure a fellow creature, we invariably injure ourselves. This is one of the laws, decreed by the Great Ruler of the universe, and which we can no more annul, than we can suspend the succession of day and night, or stop the planets in their courses. Whoever, therefore, is an enemy to *man*, is, in the same proportion, an enemy to himself. Nor are these injuries of a temporary nature. For the feelings of strife and ill will, cannot consist with love to God. We cannot be the disciples of Christ, without charity and love

\* Thomas Clarkson.



to one another. We cannot love God, while our feelings towards each other, are those which lead to violence. So that whatever excites those passions, which dissolve the bonds of fellowship, and separate man from man, does, at the same time, separate man from his Maker: and thus, not only involve present, but eternal consequences.

But if we leave the interposition of a Providence out of the question, and consider war as proceeding entirely on its own principles, the justice of a cause is no criterion by which to judge of the result of a battle. The contest then of two nations, is at once resolved into the question of respective powers. It is not who is right, but who is strongest? But this has nothing to do with the original question. How monstrously absurd is it then, to appeal to the sword, in questions of right and wrong! The result is understood to depend on which possesses the most power, or the most skill in the work of destruction. To decide which, wealth, lives, and happiness, are squandered with a demoniac prodigality! If power and right are inseparably connected, why not let the parties count their men and resources, and let the aggregate, upon paper, test the justice of their respective claims? If this idea is preposterous, if the principle on which the decision is to rest, is obviously absurd, as totally unconnected with the merits of the case in dispute, the same may be said of every principle and contingency, which can be assumed in the case of war. The advocates for war, have no right to claim the intervention of an over-ruling Providence, controlling the natural

operation of physical causes, in cases of war, since they deny the agency of that Providence, in the preservation of peace, and the protection of those who endeavour to serve him.

On those who direct the measures of governments, and put in operation the dreadful machines, which manufacture guilt and misery on the large scale, an awful responsibility must rest. They are called upon by reason and religion—by the sympathies of our nature, and the laws of God—to make a solemn pause. The Christian, however humble may be the sphere in which he is placed, is entrusted with an important charge—“Ye are the light of the world.”

The light afforded is not designed for your direction alone, but to dispel the darkness which involves those around you. Should you extinguish or conceal this, through motives of ease or interest, how will you be able to answer for the consequences? Or what will you do in the day of solemn investigation, if the blood of slaughtered thousands—the guilt, and agonies of millions, should rise in judgment against you? And let the ministers of the Gospel, take heed to the ministry they have received. Let those who name the name of Christ, and profess to be ambassadors for him, consider what was the sentence (Gal. i. 8, 9,) pronounced on those who preached any other doctrine, than that which was preached by Christ and his apostles, which was the Gospel of Peace and Salvation.



## CHAP. XVII.

### THE CONCLUSION.

On looking over the foregoing pages, it will not be difficult to discover that many striking arguments, which have been already advanced, in support of particular doctrines, are omitted. It has not been intended to say all that has been said by others, nor all that *might* be said. The mind, sincerely disposed to come to the knowledge of the truth, will rarely, if ever, require the whole body of evidence which might be produced.

The object of all arguments—of all the labours of instruments, should be, to bring mankind to that divine principle which was promised—“to lead us into all truth.” When men are thus brought to an acquaintance with this divine intelligence, they can adopt the language that was used to the woman of Samaria: “Now we believe, not because of thy saying; for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.” John iv. 42. Hence, the messengers of the gospel have nothing to claim to themselves, and their only rejoicing is in the prevalence of that power, which will be exalted over all.

I am aware that nothing can be written to meet the views of *all*. And, consequently, objections from some quarter or other are to be expected, against whatever may appear on doctrinal subjects.

But, though I anticipate this result—though, in the present state of the world, it is next to an impossibility to be otherwise—yet I have felt, and still feel, an earnest desire to cut off all occasion of offence. I intreat the forbearance of those who, at first view, may not see the propriety of the course I have taken, or the doctrines I have vindicated. All the advantages of that patient and candid examination of the subject will be their own.

Should any have remarked that I have not made the “*Trinity*” nor the *Atonement* subjects of distinct articles, and be dissatisfied with the supposed omission, I would observe, that a belief in God and his divine attributes is evident throughout the whole work; and did not appear to me to require a particular article; seeing, also, that this first principle of religion is universally believed. The Divinity of Jesus Christ, together with his appearance in the flesh—and the benefits which *all* men *have* derived from what he *did outwardly*, and *may* derive from what he does inwardly, is fully acknowledged in an article devoted to that purpose; and also in several other articles, which are nominally on other subjects. The Holy Spirit, and its presence and operation in the heart of man, according to the precious promises of our blessed Lord, are acknow-



ledged in the article on Immediate Revelation, and in divers other parts of the work. I have therefore, chosen to follow the example of the Holy Scriptures, or the holy men who were inspired to write them, in leaving the subject on this general ground, rather than to imitate those speculative theologians, who, attempting to explain the Divine nature, and its mode of subsistence, have involved themselves in endless difficulties.

In relation to the atonement, I have been governed by similar feelings. Having stated our belief that Jesus Christ, by his coming, and what he *did and suffered*, HAS placed all men in a capacity to be saved, and that, by his Spirit and power in our hearts, he is offering us complete redemption and salvation—I have considered it improper to pry into the *secret* counsels of Almighty God—and pretend to tell why and how he prepared the means of redemption which he did.

These reasons, I hope, will satisfy the candid, inquiring mind, who does not desire to push its inquiries beyond what God is pleased to reveal.

I cheerfully subscribe to the belief, that true piety and acceptance with God, are not confined to any name or profession of religion; and it would be very far from my intention to wound the feelings of any of those pious Christians who are to be found under different denominations. I wish, however, to invite their attention impartially to the doctrines on which we differ.

We, as intelligent and accountable beings, are placed here in a state of probation, for a few fleet-

ing days. The great object is, to please God, and obtain an inheritance among them that are sanctified. We are, therefore, bound to examine ourselves, and the principles by which we are governed—for we shall all, and individually, be judged according to our works, and the means of improvement bestowed upon us.

But, after all, if the zealous of other denominations should still believe that they derive comfort and advantage from the use of certain ceremonies, which we have believed it right to avoid: as these ceremonies are regarded, by those who use them, as *instrumental means*, and not as the *only* media through which the various operations of grace are experienced, it is reasonable to hope they will conclude that these operations are not less efficacious, when carried on by the immediate power “of an endless life,” than any feelings or affections which can be excited by instrumental means. The apostle says, the love of God was shed abroad in their hearts, by the Holy Ghost, which was given them. And, if this love is brought into its just pre-eminence in us, it can be no objection that it is by the immediate operation of the Holy Spirit.

There are some practices, however, among the professors of Christianity, which we do not consider in the character of ceremonies. Such, for instance, are the practices of war and slavery. And, if those whose education has reconciled them to these things, before their judgments were sufficiently matured to draw correct conclusions, should not find their own minds prepared to abandon them—will they not be



so charitable, or rather so candid, as to agree that our principle and practice, in relation to these subjects, are not without foundation ?

The Society of which I am a member has strong claims on my solicitude. "When it pleased Almighty God, to open the understandings of our forefathers, and call them to be a separate people," he permitted their faith to be proved by persecution, and by many sore trials. Yet his arm of power was underneath and round about them : and no weapon formed against them could prosper. To them was fulfilled the promise, that "all things should work together for good," for the very means which were taken to crush them, being over-ruled by Him who has all power, not only contributed to bind this persecuted little band together, furnishing occasions for the exercise of the most tender sympathy and brotherly affection, but even became subservient to the spreading of the gospel. But, now, the storm of persecution is over. The *profession* involves, comparatively, very little sacrifice. But still we have to contend with the same unwearied enemy ; and the warning given to Peter seems to be applicable in the present day. "Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat." Luke xxii. 31. In the time of suffering and distress, there was much to arrest the mind in its pursuit of perishable objects, and drive it to seek for refuge in that strong tower into which "the righteous run and find safety." But, in the sunshine of prosperity, when every thing is smiling

around us, there is peculiar danger of being lulled into a state of security, and of being separated from that preserving power by which alone we can stand against the secret wiles or open assaults of the enemy. The relief from persecution and the outward prosperity we now enjoy are among the favours of our heavenly Father. If in the possession of these multiplied blessings, our hearts should become alienated from Him who gave them—if we should worship and serve the creature more than the Creator, the consequences must be of an awful nature. By the deceitful objects around us, we may be drawn from that state of watchfulness which our Lord enjoined upon “*all*,” and thus lose that deep and humbling sense of our dependance upon *Him*, and that feeling of his love, which constitute the safety and the enjoyment of the true Christian. Thus separated from the only source of preservation, we become exposed to dangers on every hand. Let us therefore keep close to first principles, and build on that foundation, on which the prophets, apostles, and our worthy predecessors were established, and against which every storm, through past ages, has beaten in vain. The testimony of the apostle will remain true through all succeeding generations, “God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.” And, “if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.” 1 John i. 5, 7. Thus may we stand in this fellowship, “as a building compact together.” But it is only as we



walk in the light, that the fellowship of the gospel can be known. And those who walk not in this light will become obnoxious to that sentence, "I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel." Gen. xlix. 7.

For those who have received a dispensation of the gospel to preach to others, I feel an earnest desire that they keep under that humbling influence which will preserve them in humility, as well as in dedication to the cause of truth and righteousness in the earth. "Without me," said our blessed Lord, "ye can do nothing;" and the more we are brought into an experimental knowledge of the gospel of Jesus Christ, which the apostle declares to be "the power of God to salvation," the more we shall be sensible of our own weakness, and of the necessity of a constant dependance upon that power.

The admonitions of the apostle Paul to Timothy and Titus, two ministers of the gospel, are very emphatic. To the former he says, "This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy—that thou mightest war a good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience, which some having put away, concerning faith have made shipwreck." 1 Tim. i. 18, 19. "Take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." *ib.* iv. 16. And again, in his second epistle, he charges him, "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus." 2 Tim. i. 13. "But

foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes." *ib.* ii. 23. "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned, and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them." *ib.* iii. 14. And, finally, in the last chapter of the second epistle, under the immediate sense of his own departure being near at hand, he addressed this solemn language to him, "I charge thee, therefore, before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, and his kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come, when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears. And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou, in all things; endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry."

Very similar are the charges which he gave to Titus; admonishing him to "speak the things that became sound doctrine." And these several charges apply to all who enter into the same sacred office. As we have fully acknowledged the obligation of the apostolic injunction to rest upon us, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it, as of the ability which God giveth," (1 Pet. iv. 11.) it would be, in any of us, a high offence, to attempt to minister



from any other source or authority, than the pure spring of the gospel. This would indeed be "preaching for doctrines the commandments of men." And, as a ministry merely *unauthorized* must be censurable, and especially so in us, how much more awful must it be to leave the pure source of divine intelligence, and the doctrines of the apostles, and launch out into questions and speculative opinions, when the evidence remains as clear as ever it was, "*that they do gender strifes.*"

"What, (said the apostle,) if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid." Rom. iii. 3, 4. And whatever trials may be permitted to attend the church, we may remember that "the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his." 2 Tim. ii. 19. And the language of the Divine Master is peculiarly animating to his humble followers: "Fear not little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

The youth of this Society possess many privileges. To you, of this class, it may be said: "Other men have laboured, and you have entered into their labours." Our predecessors, some of whom were very young in years, not only laboured—but deeply suffered for those principles, which distinguish the Society of which you are members. They suffered the *scorn* of their intimate associates—and the frowns of those whose sentiments they highly esteemed. Their property, their liberty, and even

their lives, they freely gave up, rather than lose that peace of mind which is found in obedience to manifested duty: or suffer those testimonies to fall to the ground, which they believed had been committed to them. These very testimonies have now devolved upon you to maintain. Your corrupt passions are the greatest sacrifices called for at your hands. Faithfulness to your profession is no reproach to you. You are not called upon to breathe the damp and pestilential air, of dark and filthy dungeons: nor to encounter the rage of an infuriated mob: nor to be exposed at the whipping post nor the cart's tail, as many of our predecessors were, while their sufferings drew tears from the eyes of strangers.\* If the invincible Arm of Divine Power sustained *them*, and so filled their hearts with consolation, as to enable them to sing songs of thanksgiving, even in the midst of their tortures, would not the same Arm of Power sustain you, and enable you also to commemorate his praise, on the banks of deliverance? If *they* were bound to "hold fast the *profession* of their faith," even through such

\* In adverting to those times of persecution, arising from a mistaken zeal for religion, we may find much cause for thankfulness, in the diffusion of light which has taken place on the subject. The rights of conscience are not only recognized, and in a good degree secured, by the institutions of civil society, but there is among the different denominations, a feeling of charity towards others. Where this charity is cultivated, and suffered to rise into its just pre-eminence, all animosity and bitterness are removed, and thus the very ground of persecution will cease to exist.



severe sufferings, what will become of you, if you turn aside from the very same profession—without object, or advantage?

There is a species of levity—and even of denying Christ before men, against which it is important that the youthful mind should be guarded. The visitations of Divine Love, have not been permitted to attend your minds, to be trifled with or rejected. Youth is the season of improvement—not of vanity and frivolous amusements. You see how many end their days in the bloom of youth: and if such take no serious thought of religion, where will be their preparation for the world to come? And even among those who attain to old age, how many do we see become hardened in guilt and depravity, who nevertheless were favoured in their youth, with humbling and tendering impressions! So that the language remains to be applicable, “To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.” You are “called to glory and to virtue,” and if you neglect so great salvation, with all the privileges you enjoy—surely great will be your condemnation. But suffer the word of exhortation. Be willing to give up “the pleasures of sin, which are but for a season,” if they deserve to be called pleasures at all. Submit to the tendering impressions of the love of God, on your minds. Cherish those feelings which that love will inspire; wait in silent introversion of mind for the renewal of these impressions; and you will find yourselves in a course of preparation for hea-

ven, and be admitted to a foretaste of its joys. And in the fulfilment of the promises of Jesus Christ, “If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him,” (John xiv. 23.) you will find “strength in weakness, riches in poverty, and a present help in every needful time.”

To those in the meridian of life, who hold no particular station in Society—wish well to the cause, and perhaps apprehend themselves discharged from those active duties, which the support of the doctrines and testimonies of the Society demand—I would make a few observations.

The apostle Paul compared the individual believers to the different members of the human body. Though their offices were various, yet all were useful, and a certain dependance and mutual feeling prevailed through all. “Whether one member suffer,” said he, “all the members suffer with it, and if one member rejoice, all the members rejoice with it.” Thus, friends, however humble or obscure your stations may be, you are to contribute either to the suffering or the rejoicing of the living members of that body, to which you belong. Your lukewarmness and indifference to the great objects of religious regard, cannot fail to increase the weakness of the Society, and those painful exercises which arise in consequence of that weakness. And, on the contrary, your close attention to what passes in your own minds, and the secret exercises, into which you would be led, like the prayers and



alms-deeds of Cornelius, would rise as a memorial before him that sees in secret. And thus you might not only know an increase of religious experience and religious enjoyment, but also contribute to the prevalence of that power, which is the crown of our most solemn assemblies.

But, by settling down into a belief, that there is nothing for you to do—you will deprive yourselves of that improvement, usefulness in Society, and peace of mind, which would otherwise be your portion. It is not always from among the most wise, according to the wisdom of this world, nor from those who possess the brightest natural talents, that religion has found its ablest advocates, or Christianity its brightest ornaments. Suffer therefore your minds to be aroused from that state of ease, into which you may have fallen—not to an unqualified activity in the church, but to an entire submission to the renovating power of Truth. You will find that a remembrance of God, and a submission to the regulating, sanctifying operations of his Spirit, will not interrupt the right order of your domestic concerns. But through the seasoning virtue and illuminating nature of that influence, which would regulate your feelings and direct your conduct, you would take your portion of that character, which our Lord gave of his disciples, when he called them “the salt of the earth,” and “the light of the world.”

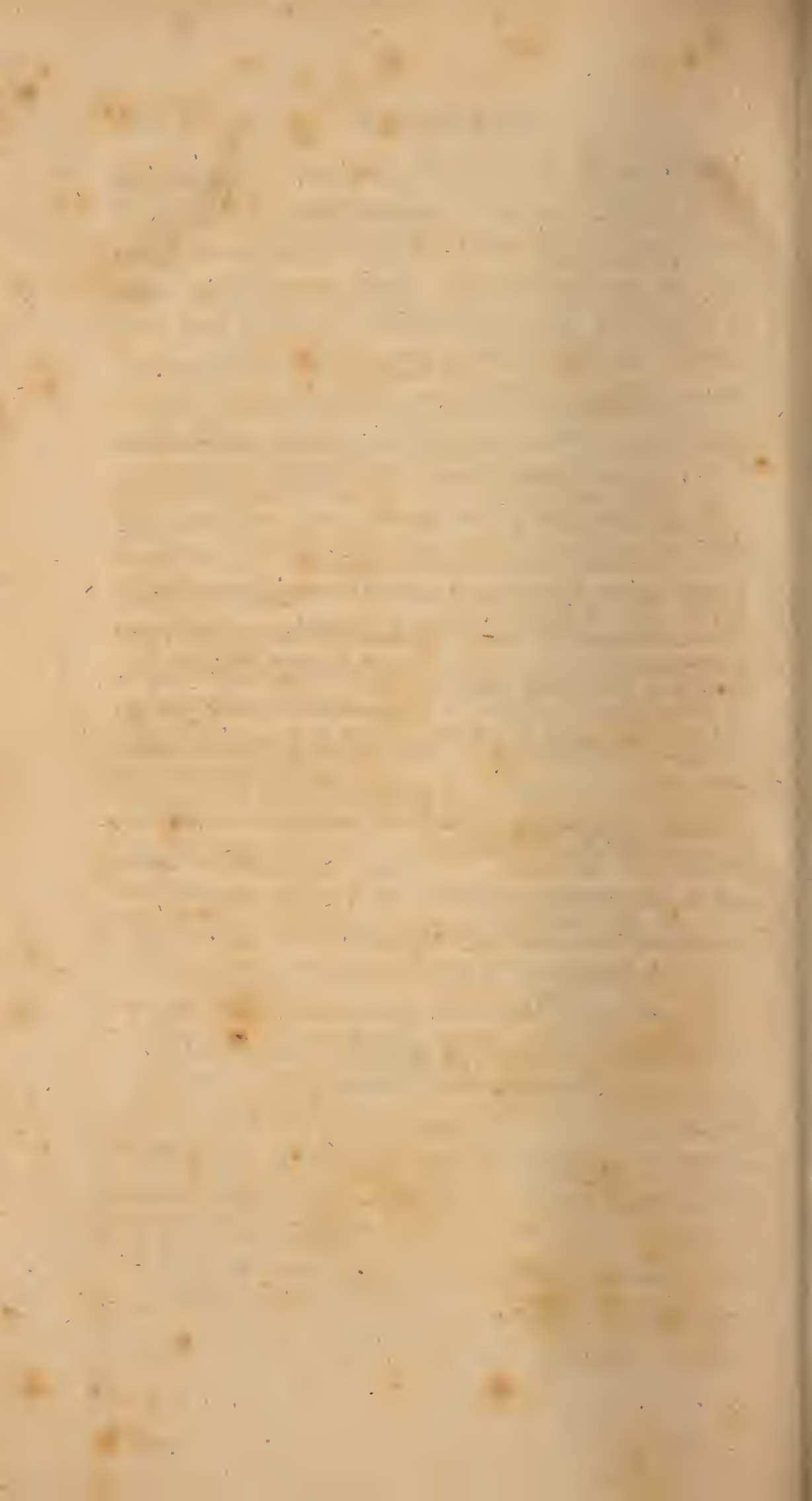
What if your opportunities of improvement may have been limited—or your capacities, in your own estimation, be small—or your natural energies

already begun to decline? you have souls to be saved or lost—you have no continuing city here, and are bound, by the most solemn obligations, to prepare for the final change; “and so much the more as ye see the day approaching.” In that very preparation for the world to come, from which no age nor condition in life can exempt you—you will experience a preparation for the various duties that devolve upon you, in civil and religious society.

Whatever may be our name, as to religious profession—whatever our stations in the militant Church, the closing address of the apostle, on a very interesting occasion, may be suitably applied: “I commend you to God, and to the word of his Grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.”

THE END.





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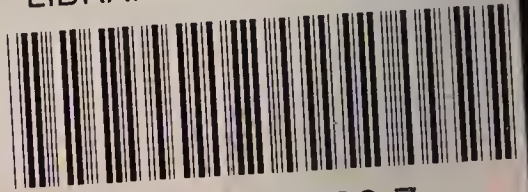
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